

Sikh Religion and Islam

A Comparative Study

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Abbreviations used in this book

Main abbreviations:

GGS=Guru Granth Sahib. HQ=Holy Quran. SM= Sahih Muslim SB= Sahih Bukhari.

E=English

P=Panjabi

U=Urdu

Sources and quotations

The authors hold the view that the Holy Scriptures of the Sikh religion and Islam are the only authentic sources for studying these world religions. For the Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib is the eternal Guru and for Islam the Holy Quran is the very Word of God. Both have just claims to be the greatest literary masterpieces of humankind. It is not possible for mere mortals, no matter how ambitious, “to measure the ocean of prophetic eloquence with the thimble of pedestrian analysis”¹. It is not possible to translate the revealed Word of God; the best we can do is to use the most acceptable mainstream interpretations available. This pioneering effort will need to be much improved by scholars from both religions.

In Sikhism, the works of Bhai Gurdas² are the most authentic source for interpreting the underlying message of the Guru’s Word (*Gurbani*) in Guru Granth Sahib. Further interpretations are mostly based on Gurmukhi/Panjabi sources e.g. S. Manmohan Singh’s interpretation of Guru Granth Sahib in Panjabi and English, and the works of Professor Sahib Singh and Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha in Panjabi. Quotations from the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh are only those which have generally been accepted by the Khalsa Panth, the Order of Khalsa, as attributable to the Guru.

For Islam, unless stated otherwise, the references to the Holy Quran are from ‘The Glorious Quran’ Translated By Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall and Published By TA Ha Publishers 1 Wynne Road London SW9 0BB. References to the Ahadis, the Islamic code, are from the Sahih Muslim in English, by Abdul Hamid Sadiqi, Lahore; and Sahih Bukhari in Urdu by Sharif Ishait-al-Islam, Delhi, and another translation in English by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan Islamic University, Medina (Saudi Arabia).

All other sources quoted are entirely for supporting the mainstream interpretations mentioned above.

¹Professor Arthur J Arberry, “The Koran Interpreted”, Oxford University Press, 1982.

²Bhai Gurdas (the first) scribed the first Granth (later given the Guruship by the Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh) under the direction of Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V). His works include the 40 *Vaars* and 556 *Kabits*, which provide the most authentic guidance to the interpretation of Gurbani and the Sikh way of life (*rehat*). (See Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, “Mahan Kosh” (P), National Book Shop, reprint 1996.)

Quotations from the Holy Scriptures

There is no difficulty about giving the relevant numbers of the *ayats* (verses) of the Holy Quran as these are numbered. Quotations from Guru Granth Sahib are given with the relevant page numbers. Also, a few opening words of the quotation are given in romanised Panjabi, except for the Chapter on similarities (Chapter 3), where Gurmukhi (Panjabi) font is also used.

Sikh sources

GGGS Guru Granth Sahib

All other Sikh sources are given at the footnotes without using abbreviations P

Sikh Gurus: Each Sikh Guru is referred to by name and also by the number from I to X in accordance with the Sikh tradition e.g. Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V).

God Words: Use of capital initials for certain words in Sikhism e.g. the *Name*, the *Truth*, the *Ultimate Reality* etc. signify words or expressions which refer to the God Being.

Islamic sources

1.KM	Kashaf -al- Mahjub Data Ganj Bakhsh Trans. Jamil Ahmad & Tariq	U
2.SM	Sahih Muslim by Abdul Hamid Sadiqi Lahore	E
3.SB	Sahih Bukhari Sharif Ishait-al-Islam Delhi	U
	Dr.Muhammad Muhsin Khan Islamic University of Medina	E
4.MM	Mishkat-al-Masabih Dr.James Robson Lahore	E
5.TD	Trimidhi Sharif Lal Kuan Delhi	U
6.TB	Tarikh Tabari by Tabari Nafees Academy Karachi	U
7.CIS	Concept of an Islamic State by Ishtiaq Ahmed Stockholm	E
8.H.Q	The Holy Quran Tafsir Saghir by Bashir -ud- Din Mahmood	U
	---Do--- By A.Yusuf Ali Amana Corporation Brentwood USA	E
	Glorious Koran Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall TA HA	
	Publishers Ltd. 1 Wynne Road London SW 9 0BB	E
	Al-Quran-al Karim Shabir Ahmed Pub: Dar-us-tasnif Karachi.	U
	Kunz-al-Iman-al-Quran-Al Karim Ahmed Raza Khan Brelvi	
	Pub: Taj Co. Lahore	U
9.HB	The Holy Bible Gideons International Lutterworth England.	E

References from Sahih Bukhari to be read as Number.V=volume & B=Book.
For example 2325V4B34 means item No. 2325 from book 34 volume 4.

Foreword

Today different religions, which at one time could have looked at other faiths with aloof superiority, have been thrown together in a way that demands dialogue and peaceful co-existence.

Whatever our religion, we live in a world in which family breakdown, escalating crime, stress and depression go hand in hand with a naïve pursuit of happiness through material prosperity. Many feel that it is a society powered by greed that has lost its sense of direction.

It has always been the responsibility of our different religions to give moral direction and remind us of ethical imperatives for sane, balanced and responsible living. Never before has the need been greater; nor the opportunities. Wider educational opportunities and near instant communications can clearly help our individual faiths to provide sound guidance for the young. More importantly, they can enable different faiths that find themselves in close physical proximity, as in Britain today, to work together for the common good. Interfaith dialogue has never been more important. It is only through understanding our neighbour's faith that we can learn about and rejoice in the values we hold in common, whilst at the same time respecting sensitive differences.

There is however a real difficulty in dialogue. Some religions, notably, Christianity and Islam, have missionary zeal, which some see as a missionary imperative to convert others to their religion; to the 'one true faith'. This can make dialogue, at best difficult and at worst impossible. In contradistinction, the Sikh Gurus taught that God is not interested in religious labels and that no one religion has a monopoly of truth.

We must all be true to our different religious beliefs. Sikhs do however object, as they did in the Gurus' times, to the use of force, coercion or misrepresentation as a means of conversion. The origin of this remarkable book by G.S.Sidhu and Gurmukh Singh lies in the systematic misrepresentation of both Sikhism, and importantly, the high ideals of Islam, by some zealous Muslims, particularly in

schools and university campuses. The aim of the authors is to clear the fog of misrepresentation by presenting parallel teachings side by side in an objective and respectful way.

The main teachings of Sikhism are described in an admirably concise way, and the parallel teachings of Islam given with detailed references. Meticulous research confirms that the two faiths have much in common: belief in one God, the importance of charity and compassion and the acceptance of God's will. There are also important differences, notably on the nature of God, the afterlife, gender equality and current social customs.

Gurbachan Singh Sidhu and Gurmukh Singh deserve every praise for this monumental work; but it is only a beginning. There is still much to be done to ensure the work is fully acceptable to both communities. A major area for further research is in the use of metaphor and allegory in both religions, and the danger of taking the illustration too literally. The authors have clearly done this in their presentation of Sikh teachings and endeavoured to do the same for the teachings of Islam. I suspect some Muslim scholars might feel that figurative language is sometimes interpreted too literally. There can clearly be a difference of perception between a believer and one looking at a faith from outside. No one who knows the two respected authors will doubt their sincerity. The hope is that a future edition will also carry the name of a distinguished Muslim scholar to take this important dialogue further to improve co-operation and understanding between the two communities.

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Our thanks are also due to the following for scrutinizing the work and for offering constructive comments. Ms Anne Lowthian, Executive Director and Mr. A.S Sahota (Ottawa) Director of World Sikh Organisation (of Canada), S. Karnail Singh, Institute of Sikh Studies Chandi Garh, S. Meharbaan Singh Kurbaan (Advocate), Mr.Swaran Singh Talib, Major.Jasbeer Singh (Canada), Mr. Hardev Singh Shergill (U.S.A) and many other scholars who read the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions for improving the draft.

We can not adequately thank the various Gursikhs and Gurdwaras who contributed funds towards meeting the cost of printing this book. Their names are too numerous to be mentioned. We would, however, be failing in our duty if we did not thank Mr. Bakhtawar Singh Sehra (Nottingham) for arranging the matter, typing it on his computer, and for offering financial help for its publication.

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Authors

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“The *Qazis*³ and *Mullahs* assembled to question Nanak on the subject of religion and God.....”

“Who is superior - Hindu or Muslim?” Asked the *Qazis*”.

Replied Nanak: “without good deeds both Hindus and Muslims will lament.... Both are equal before God.” (Varan Bhai Gurdas 1.33)

“The world is ablaze; O Lord save it through your benediction.

Through whichever door (religion) humankind seeks deliverance, save it that way.”

(Nanak III, Guru Amar Das)

1.1 The need for religion

Etymologically, the word “religion” is derived from “lagore” (possibly, from Latin *religio*, or from *religare* - re-back + *ligare*-bind, Oxford English Dictionary) which means “to bind or bring closer”. In a similar sense, the Sikh Gurus used the word *Dharam* or *Panth*. The Guru says, “The true Guru is one who unites all”⁴.

From time immemorial, man has felt the need of some power or deity to liberate him from his toils and to protect him from dangers. He seeks peace and hope through contact with a superior power.

³ Justice was delivered in Islam by the Caliphs themselves. As the Muslim Empire grew *Qazis* were appointed to dispense justice. The Sikh Gurus found the *Qazis* arrogant, prejudiced and bribe-takers. Sikhism defined the *Qazi*'s role as follows. “*Such kamawe soi Qazi*” (Only He is

a *Qazi* who practises truth)

⁴ nwnk siqguru AYsw jwxIAY jo sBsY ley imlwie jIau (pMnw 72).
Nanak Satgur aisa jaaniay jo sabhse lai milai jio p. 72.

Thus for the Sikhs “Society and religion go together”⁵. The same is true for Islam.

The world needs religion. More so in the insatiable material consumerism of today which is leading to yet more lust, greed, discord, social problems, rich/poor divide and irresponsible attitudes to world problems like pollution and nuclear proliferation. Worldly pursuits for comfort, status and security need to be balanced by the quest for spiritual harmony. Attachment and preoccupation with the “here and now” need to be balanced by a detached worldview and continual reflection on the purpose of life itself. Meditation on the Reality behind the relativities and passing phases of this life should promote a more thought provoking and responsible attitude and response to life.

However, no single religion or path has a monopoly on harmonious living in which worldly pursuits are subjected to spiritual goals. The ideal modern plural society is striving towards universal togetherness, mutual respect and co-existence, rather than the achievement of outer uniformity. The common bond, which holds the diverse human cultures together, is the omnipresent and omniscient image of the Creator reflected in the rich diversity of His creation. That is the essence of all world religions.

1.2 The need for this study

Some, who profess to follow the teachings of their own religions see it fit to waste their energies in trying to discredit, demolish, or deny the independence or authenticity of other religious systems. Such attempts are futile because religious thought stands or falls on its own merits. For example, no amount of persuasion can make slavery, gender discrimination and the degrading caste system, acceptable to civilised norms. Barbaric rituals like *suttee* (widows burning themselves to death in the funeral pyres of their husbands), is repugnant to the majority of humanity. Some religious practices may be opposed by certain non-religious groups e.g. ritual slaughter of animals, (as well as denounced by Sikh religion) would be opposed by animal rights groups. On the other hand, in the modern pluralistic societies, the humanitarian, liberating and love inspiring

⁵ G. S. Mansukhani “Introduction to Sikhism” p.11.

aspects of world religions have become the most acceptable common denominators. Not surprisingly, the tendency, even for the dogma- based older religions, is to interpret their religious tenets in terms of parenthood⁶ of God, kinship of humankind, love for all, justice, equality, and freedom from fear and oppression.

Therefore, there is not much difference in the underlying aspirations of religious systems today as these ultimately represent the aspirations of the universal human society.⁷ However, different world religious systems do follow different paths, and their aspirations regarding spiritual goals may be different. For a Sikh, the ultimate goal is a harmonious equipoise of body and mind, a state of bliss (*sahij anand*) reached through the union of the lonely soul with the Creator. Other religions may be seeking a heavenly abode after this life. Nevertheless, most religions agree that only “good deeds” help individuals to achieve their religious objectives. It bodes well for the human society that the diverse definitions of “good deeds” are becoming less diverse with the progress of the global human society.

Most people prefer to select and follow a religious path as a life of discipline. That is good for the human society provided the purpose of religion is clearly understood. Religion gives guidance and, together with social laws, provides the infrastructure for civilised societies. Regrettably, however, like other social systems, religion has been, and continues to be, exploited by the unscrupulous.

It is the intolerant and predatory behaviour of certain individuals and groups regarding other religions and cultures, which provokes conflict leading to counter offensives. Such individuals or groups forget that the only challenge which they face and to which they need to respond urgently, is that of the age of discovery, the age of science and technology i.e. the new age and the challenges of the millennium. Yet, out of fear of diversity and due to their ignorance, they are more concerned with the destruction of healthy ideologies and cultures which enrich and hold together each diverse human

⁶ The concept of God in Sikhism is above gender. God is both, mother and father.

⁷ “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is useful for instruction in righteousness”
(St. Paul Timothy)

society and social system. Destroy or supplant a religious ideology and you destroy a unique culture and a social system. A more sensible response to such fanaticism would be in the form of comparative studies of religions to promote better understanding of the different paths leading to the Ultimate Reality.

This study by the authors is intended to fall into this category.

Enlightened leaders of all the world religions are responding well to the challenges of the new age. Regrettably, some who continue to live in the past, have difficulty in accepting that paths other than their own can also lead to the Ultimate Reality. At first, due to the perceived threat from the egalitarian Sikh *Khalsa Panth* to the Brahmanic tradition of caste superiority and social privileges, some Brahmanic scholars made (and are continuing to make) determined efforts to suppress and undermine an idea the time for which had come. They argue “Sikhism is a branch of Hinduism”. “Sikhism is a revival of old Vedic *kshatrya* tradition (*Sanatan Dharma*)”. “Sikhism was a Hindu response to the Islamic oppression” (therefore by implication its time is now past). “The eldest sons of many northern Indian Hindu families became Sikhs” (therefore that is offered as a proof that Sikhism is very much a part of Hinduism). “The terminology of Guru Granth Sahib is vedic” and so on.

Now we have some Islamic friends who claim as follows:

“But a careful study of Sikh traditions and relics of Sikhism leads to an irrefutable conclusion that Guru Nanak discarded the Hindu doctrines and assimilated the teachings of Islam to such an extent that Sikhism, in its pristine form, can be looked upon as a sect of Islam.” (“Birth of Sikhism” by “Professor” Abdul Jaleel claiming to write for some group called the “Amhedya Movement in Islam” in 1993.)⁸

Abdul Jaleel’s paper and other publications written in a similar vein, contain such glaring factual untruths that they do not merit serious

⁸ A response to Abdul Jaleel’s arguments is available in “A Challenge to Sikhism” by G.S.Sidhu obtainable from Gurmatt Bhawan, Mandi Mullan Pur, District Ludhiana (India). Also read “The Mission of Guru Nanak - A Muslim appraisal” by Prof: Mushir ul Haq.

consideration. However, the mentality, which prompts such claims, deserves some attention due to its potential for disturbing the harmony, which clearly does exist between the great religions of the world. In our view, such people do a disservice to the religious traditions to which they subscribe.

What should be the response to such false and provocative literature?

To go on the defensive would serve the purpose of the likes of “Professor” Abdul Jaleel. On the other hand, to attack another great religion would be irresponsible; and, even more importantly, against the Sikh teaching: all doors to divine knowledge are acceptable to Sikhism. Indeed, the Sikhs pray to the Lord to shower His Benediction on all those who seek His Grace no matter through which door (meaning religion) they come.

Our response therefore is a sincere attempt to understand the teachings of other religions, in this particular case, Islam, and place these side by side with the Sikh teachings. The intention is to promote an understanding of the different paths to divinity.

However, even such an approach is fraught with risks. The authors of such studies cannot pretend that they are not influenced by their own religious upbringing or by their conscious or subconscious impressions of other religions. They could also be accused of selective reporting to suit their own bias. We accept these limitations and subjectivity but assure the readers that we have made every effort to quote authentic sources and prioritize topics in accordance with general human needs for religious instruction and guidance.

In his “Foreword” Sardar Indarjit Singh has identified two main limitations of this study. Firstly, the question of interpreting the metaphor and allegory in both religions. Secondly, that a distinguished Muslim scholar should be involved. We readily accept these limitations, although, there is a real difficulty regarding both. A Muslim scholar may be prepared to interpret the deeper moral and general truths of his religion, but would

be in some difficulty when asked to make these available for a publication of this type. Also, other scholars may not agree with his or her interpretation. As Sardar Indarjit Singh suggests, such interpretation will always remain an area of continuing research. However, we would welcome contributions from any distinguished Muslim scholar for inclusion in a future edition of this book.

It may be said that the Islamic laws (*Shariat* and *Ahadis* respectively), quoted in this book, are sufficiently detailed so as not to leave much scope for further interpretation. On the other hand, there is no parallel Sikh law code other than the brief *Rehat Maryada*, thus allowing much more scope for continual interpretation. Provided the limitations of this pioneering effort are clearly understood, we believe the readers will find this publication of some help to understand the main differences between the two ideologies. If some prefer to describe this study as a Sikh view of Sikhism and Islam, so be it, provided it is clearly understood, that other than quoting authentic sources, we have not attempted to interpret the underlying metaphor or allegory. That is best left to the followers of the two faiths. Any generalizations in the introductory paragraphs of specific topics are based almost entirely on the authentic interpretations, which follow.

1.3 Sikhism and Islam: introductory comments

As will be seen in this study, there are many similarities between Sikhism and Islam and some of these are listed in chapter 3. Both are whole-life socio-political religions. Both aim to uplift the personal lives of individuals to higher social and spiritual levels. Both religions believe in the Oneness of God and are against idol worship in any form. Praying together in congregation, meditation on the Name of God, belief in the Will of God (*Razaa* in Islam and *Hukam* in Sikhism) are central to both religions. Both shun the caste system and combine the goals of spiritual and temporal attainment. There are other similarities like setting aside a portion of one's

income for religious or charitable purposes (*zakat* in Islam and *daswandh* in Sikhism), many names for remembering God, a prescribed daily routine for prayers and stress on constant remembrance of God ⁹. Both proscribe certain health damaging habits e.g. taking alcohol.

Sikhism places great importance on the underlying spirit (*dharma*) of religion, which is the recognition, and dedicated pursuance of one's duty in life. Islam also is close to this ideal, although, it is much more prescriptive. Both religions stress the importance of acquisition of knowledge through research and discussion. Thus:

“Sikhism is to research, discuss and understand the Guru's teaching.” (GGS p. 465) ¹⁰

“A researcher can realize (the truth) but one who argues (in ignorance) moves away (from the truth.)” (GGS p.1255) ¹¹

“The Holy Quran has in clear terms, indicated how these thousands of curtains can be removed, so as to get an immediate, if imperfect, vision of Allah. The way indicated is through the acquisition of knowledge.” ¹²

However, despite these and many other similarities further discussed at Chapter 3, there are some basic differences in the practice and in the interpretation of the role of religion in human life. Sikhism places great importance on freedom from fear as the first step towards spiritual progress. This is achieved by removing all animosity from the mind (i.e. by being *nirvair*), and, by achieving a harmonious relationship between individual will and the Universal Will (*hukam razai*). For mankind, this state of harmonious relationship (attunement with the Supreme Truth) is the reward, and

⁹ “Recite His Name with every breath” is frequently repeated in GGS e.g. pages 295, 456, 501, 533, 825 and 1085 etc. “Men of understanding such as remember Allah, standing, sitting, and reclining....” (HQ3: 191).

¹⁰ isKI isikAw gur vIcWir (pMnw 465). *Sikhi sikhia Gur vichar* (GGS p.465).

¹¹ Koji aupjY bwdI ibnsY hau bil bil gur krqwrw (pMnw 1255). *Khoji upjay baadi binsay*..... (GGS p.1255)

¹² Article on Islamic culture by M T Akbar in the Cultural Heritage of India Vol. IV, p573, The Ramakrishna Mission, Institute of Culture, Calcutta 1983.)

separation from it is the punishment. Therefore, despite the use of traditional idiom of heaven and hell and judgement by *Dharamraj* (God's judge) on the basis of good and bad deeds, Sikh ideology does not make some heavenly reward hereafter as the goal of human life.

“Says Kabir, through enlightenment, have I freed myself from (the reward of) heaven or the fear of hell; I remain forever immersed in His Name.¹³ On the other hand, the “fear and reward” mechanism is a consistent theme of the Islamic ideology. Thus: “Those who purchase disbelief at the price of faith harm Allah not at all, but theirs will be a painful doom (HQ 3:177)

There are similar warnings in Guru Granth Sahib based on the universal law of “what you sow so shall you reap”, but, essentially, freedom from fear remains the underlying theme of Sikhism.

Further differences appear in other areas where Sikhism steadfastly supports human rights, equal rights for women, tolerance of other ideologies etc. Sikhism promotes the “unity in diversity” concept of pluralistic societies in the spirit of Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of humankind¹⁴. Sikh Gurdwaras are open to everyone without distinction. The Islamic concept of a non-believer (*kafir*), and how such a person should be treated, is alien to Sikh thought.

The authors believe that truly enlightened beings (call them prophets, God's messengers, gurus or what you will) deliver divine messages, but human interpretation, due to its own limitations, does introduce apparent variations with the passage of time. This study looks at the main tenets of Sikhism and Islam so that the reader can get a better understanding of both. The headings are not exhaustive, although, every effort has been made to include the traditional topics which a religious ideology is expected to address. Serious readers should make every effort to refer to the original sources, especially, the Holy Quran, the *Ahadis* and The Holy Guru Granth Sahib and

¹³ kbIr surg nrk qy mY riHE siqgur ky prswid (pMnw 1370). *Kabir surag narak te mai reho....*(GGS p. 1370)

¹⁴ Refer to note 6 above: God is gender neutral in Sikhism and “brotherhood” embraces all humankind.

seek consultation with devotees of each faith; for, only these sources truly reflect spiritual instruction to their respective followers.

CHAPTER 2

Approaches

Despite many similarities, Sikhism and Islam aspire towards very different objectives in this life and hereafter. For example, while many of the attributes of God described in each religion appear to be similar, the underlying God/human relationship is very different. All the similarities mentioned under the various headings need to be considered in the light of what, in fact, is a radically different approach to the attainment of quite different religious objectives. Both, in Sikhism and in Islam, religion plays a major role in directing human affairs. Righteous conduct and discipline of body and mind are regarded as very important by both religions. However, as will be seen in this study, there are some fundamental differences in approach. One main reason for this is the degree to which each religion relies on “reward and punishment”.

It would be useful to consider the extent to which the two systems rely on reward on the one hand, and on fear and punishment on the other. Rewards may be in the nature of incentives for accepting ideologies and punishment would be in the nature of disincentives if these ideologies are not accepted or adhered to.

2.1 Sikhism

Sikhism does not accept fear *per se* as the instrument for promoting and defending religious ideology. It is true that the (self-inflicted) punishment for those who turn away from truthful conduct, the “*manmukhs*” can be terrible. Such souls do go through countless life forms suffering the pain of births, life experiences and deaths until, either through their own virtuous actions, or through God’s grace (*nadar or rehmat*), they are saved. Fear may be an element in the (self-imposed) discipline necessary to abide by the Lord’s Will

(*hukam* or *razaa*). The elements, earth, moon, the sun and the universal systems are said to perform their “duties” in “fear” of the Lord. Everything remains in His “awe”. And so should humankind do its duty and understand and obey His *hukam*.

However, while in a Sikh’s relationship with God there is a combination of great wonderment which (may be equated to a form of “fear” referred to as *bhae* or *bhao* in *Gurbani*) and loving devotion (*bhāao*), on the whole, Sikhism is opposed to any form of fear. “The fear of God in Islam (and in Christianity) has been converted into love¹⁵ of God in Sikhism”.

“I am asked by my friends what is the Lord like, (all I can say is that) I am filled with His love and cannot describe Him.”(GGS p.459)¹⁶

God is Fearless (*Nirbhao*) and nearness to Him makes one fearless.

“All fear is destroyed when one worships the Fearless (God)” (GGS p.293)¹⁷. “Where fearless God is, there is no fear. Where there is fear, the Lord is not there.” (GGS p. 1374)¹⁸

Indeed, a fearless disposition is a pre-condition to the worship of the fearless and loving God.

“Worship God without fear in your heart” (GGS pp. 201, 824 and several other references).¹⁹

Sikhism says “ Fear no one and give fright to none”.²⁰ “Be kind

¹⁵ Introduction to Sikhism by G S Mansukhani page 15 Hemkunt Press 1997.

¹⁶ imil sKIaw puCih khu kMq nIswxI (pMnw 459). *Mil saakhia puchheh kaho Kaant*

nisani.....(GGS p. 459)

¹⁷ inrBau jpY sgl Bau imtY (pMnw 293). *Nirbhao japay sagal bhao mitay*..... (GGS p.293)

¹⁸ jh AnBau qih BY nhIN jh Bau qh hir nwih (pMnw 1374). *Jeh anbhao the bhai nahi*.....(GGS p. 1374)

¹⁹ inrBau hoie Bjhu Bgvwn (pMnw 201) inrBau hoie Bjhu jgdIsY (pMnw 824). *Nirbhao hoi bhajoh Bhagwaan* ..(p.201); *Nirbhao hoi bhajoh Jagdisai*.... (GGS p. 824).

²⁰ khu kbIr suK sihj smwvau AwP nw frau nw Avr frwvau (pMnw 326-27). *Kaho Kabir sukh sahij samavoh*....(GGS p. 326-27).

and forgiving”.²¹

It is not so much fear as the inner awakening of soul, which brings the follower to the Guru’s way.

The Sikh way of life (*Sikhi*) relies on truthful conduct and a short formal code of discipline (*Rehat Maryada*) based on some basic injunctions issued by Guru Gobind Singh, based on the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhism has no code like the detailed Islamic codes of *Sharia* and *Fiqah*. The Guru says: “Purify what is impure (purify your mind), and let the Lord’s presence be your religious *Hadis* (tradition)” (GGS p.1084)²². The stress is on the study of the Guru’s teachings in Guru Granth Sahib.

The above is the ideological position. However, due to ignorance, like the practice of the caste system amongst the Sikhs, so condemned by the Guru, bogus *sant* (saint) cults, thriving on fear and superstition, abound amongst the Sikhs today. They have revived heaven and hell and the traditional “reward and punishment hereafter” machinery of religion through selective and out of context quotes from Guru Granth Sahib.

2.2 Islam

In Islam God is Merciful and Compassionate and belief in One God is paramount. God demands unquestioning devotion, which may be interpreted as a form of love. Essentially, however, Islam is based on fear of punishment and reward. For those who “fear” the Lord the rewards are great (HQ 39:23). Through the operation of the *Ahadis* Islam is much more prescriptive regarding human affairs than Sikhism. God’s wrath can be terrible and is to be feared. The same

²¹ It is a historical fact that not a single person was hanged during the regime of the Khalsa under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in which the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were regarded as equal partners. The progress and prosperity during this regime (*Halemi raj*) has remained unparalleled in Indian history. The Khalsa nearly defeated the combined forces of the British and the rest of India. A Muslim poet Shah Muhammad witnessed the excellence of Khalsa Raj and the closely fought wars which he called “Jang Hind Punjab” meaning the war between the invading British led Indian army and the defending independent Punjabi people’s army of the Khalsa.

²² *nwpwk pwku kr hdUUr hdIsw ... (pMnw 1084). Napaak paak kar hadur hadisa....* (GGS p. 1084).

applies to some extent in human relationships e.g. between the rulers and the subjects and between the believers and those who do not.

For the non-believers i.e. those who turn their face away from God, there is only severe punishment. Fear acts as the main disciplining agent for conducting human, spiritual and temporal affairs.

Islam divides the society into *Momins (Muslims)* and *Kafirs* (non-Muslims). Kafirs are to be treated as *Zimmies*²³

“And Fight them until persecution is no more and the religion is all for Allah”(HQ 8:39)²⁴

²³ Kafir literally means ‘ a heretic’. OED translates it as ‘infidel’. Zimmies are second class citizens.

²⁴ Fighting against non-believers is a holy duty of Muslims (HQ 2:190, 4: 76, 9: 5,6,29 etc)

CHAPTER 3

Similarities

The similarities between Sikhism and Islam need to be considered in the light of the main ideological differences discussed in Chapter 2

3.1 Impediments

According to Islam there are two impediments in the way of the seekers of God (a) *Hijaab-e-Raini*- as a black stone cannot be made white and (b) *Hijaab-e-Ghaini*- as the dirt on a mirror is unsightly but it can be wiped clean (KM).

(a) “For the many past births humans have collected sins. Their minds have become so black that like the oil extractor’s cloth they cannot be easily washed clean.”²⁵ (GGS p. 651)

(b) “Clothes soiled with grime are washed white with soap. When intellect is polluted, only remembrance of God’s name can purify it.”²⁶ (GGS p. 4)

3.2 God is near

Allah tells us that if a believer “draws near me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit. If he walks towards me, I rush towards him.”(SM 6476)

²⁵ jnm jnm kI ies mn kau mlu lwgI kwlw hoAw isAwhu.....(pMnw 651).
Janam janam ki is mann
ko mal laagi...(GGS p.651).

²⁶ mUq plIqI kpV hoie dy swbUx leIey auh Doie.....(pMnw 4). *Moot*
palitee kapar hoi.....(GGS
p.4)

“If a devotee advances one step towards the Guru, the Guru advances millions of steps towards the devotee”²⁷ (Bhai Gurdas)

3.3 God is one

God is one. *La Ilaha, ill-Allah* (There is no God but God) (H.Q 1:1)
My Lord is one unique and peerless”²⁸ (GGS p. 350)

3.4 God is not born

God is not born. “*Lam yalid wa Lam yoolad, Kullu Shiyan halikum illa wajh*” (He is neither the begetter nor the begotten. All things are mortal except Him” (Holy Quran)

“God is devoid of birth or death”²⁹. (GGS p.113)

“God is without parents. He is without gender and needs no woman”.³⁰ (GGS p. 597)“Thou art the unfathomable Lord of all and do not have to enter the womb”.³¹ (GGS p. 1095)

²⁷ crn srn gur eyk pYNfw jwey c`l siggur kot **pYNfw** Awgy hoey lyq hY (BweI gurdws). *Charan saran*

Gur ek painda jai chall.... (Bhai Gurdas).

²⁸ swihb myrw eyko hY eyko hY BweI eyko hY (pMnw 350). *Sahib mera eko hai....*(GGS p. 350)

dr mzHib mw ZYr pRsqI n kund,sr qw bw kdm bhoS msqI nw kund (BweI nMd lwl). *Dar majhab*

ma gor prasti na kunad, sar ta ba kadam bahosh masti na kunad (Bhai Nand Lal). myry Drm

ivc iek pRBU BgqI qoN ibnW hor iksy dI pUjw nhIM ho skdI [AsIN sdw isr qoN pYrW q`k hoS iv`c

rihMdy hW msqI ivc nhIMN n`cdy [Meaning, “In my religion, no other but (the One) God may be

worshipped. We remain in control of our senses from head to feet and do not dance in senseless

ecstasy.” (Bhai Nand Lal).

²⁹ jnm mrx qy rihq nwrwix (pMnw 113). *Janam maran te rehat Narain* (GGS p. 113).

³⁰ nw iqs mwq ipqw suq bMDp nw iqs kwm nw nwrI (pMnw 597). *Na tis maat pita sut bandhap....*(p. 597).

³¹ qUM pwrBRhm prmysr join nw AwveI (pMnw 1095). *Tu Parbrahm Parmesar jon na awae...* (GGS p. 1095)

3.5 God is all knowing

“Even if thou speakest aloud then lo! He knoweth the secret (thought) and (that which is yet) more hidden” (H.Q 20: 7)

“He Himself knows, He Himself acts and sets things right. Before Him shouldst thou stand and humble yourself in prayer³²” (GGS p. 1093)

3.6 As you sow, so shall you reap

The Holy Quran says, “*Jaza -un be ma kanu ya’ malum*”

“You will receive rewards in proportion to the deeds you do”³³

“Whatever good or bad you do, so you reap the (self inflicted) reward or punishment”³⁴ (GGS p. 470)

However, it is important to note that this similarity is limited to the operation of the universal law of cause and effect or action and consequence only. When “reward and punishment” is used to accept or reject an ideology, Sikhism and Islam part company.

3.7 Submission to God

Islam literally means submission, which means to accept God’s Will in speech, mind and body. When a man submits to God his personal desires and emotions are replaced with devotion and deep spirituality. Islam calls it “*Fi-Sabil-Allah*” and the Quran says, “Say: Lo! My worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”(H.Q 6:163)

“Accept the will of God, consider Him the Creator and sublimite

³² Awpy jwxY kry Awip Awpy AwxY rwis (pMnw 1093). *Aapay janay karay Aap.....* (GGS p. 1093)

³³ “Whoso bringeth a good deed will receive ten fold the like thereof, while who so bringeth an ill

deed will be rewarded but the like thereof” (HQ 6:161)

³⁴ mMdw cMgw Awpxw Awpy hI kIqw pwvxw (pMnw 470). *Manda changa aapna.....* (GGS p. 470)

your ego”³⁵ (GGS p. 141)

“*Ikhlās*” in Islam is the same as “*sih*” in Sikhism. Those who attain a high spiritual stage of dedication (*Fanāh-fillāh*) are known as “*Salīm*” in Islam and “*Brahm gyani*” in Sikhism. The Guru says, “As water loses itself in water so does the soul mingle with the All-soul”³⁶ (GGS p. 278)

“You are me and I am you where is the gap? Our relation is the same as that of gold and a gold ornament or that of water and its ripples”³⁷ (GGS p. 93)

3.8 Test of faith

Sunni Muslims believe in *shahadat*. When a situation arises in which a Muslim is called to avow his faith to identify himself, he must do so even at the cost of his life.³⁸

The Sikh concept of “*Sikhi kesa swasan naal nibhauni*” (Sikh *Ardaas*), that ‘a Sikh must remain true to the faith till his or her last breath’, is similar. Guru Gobind Singh expresses deep trust in his true Sikh:

“Even if a mountain sprouts wings and takes off, my Sikh will not abjure his faith.”³⁹

³⁵ rb kI rjwie mMny isr aupir krqw mMny Awpu gvwvY (pMnw 141).
Rabb ki rajai mannay siray
uppar...(GGS p. 141).

³⁶ ijau jl mih jlu Awie Ktnw iqauN joqI sMig joiq smwnw (pMnw 278). *Jion jal meh jal aa-ay*
khatana...(GGS p. 278)

³⁷ qohI mohI mohI qohI AMgru kYsw knk ktk jl qRMg jYsw (pMnw 93). *Tohi mohi, mohi tohi.....*(GGS p.93).

³⁸ Some Muslims believe in *Taqiyya*, which means that in times of extreme danger it is legitimate

to pretend about one’s true faith and to employ words of double meaning or mental reservation

to wriggle out of the crisis. They quote Quran 3:29 and 16:106 (See Hugh’s dictionary of Islam). Abraham called his wife ‘sister’ when he was in danger (SB 578)

³⁹ prbq ky nK pMKn Dwr aufyN KVgyS nw pIT idKwvY (gurU goibMd isMG). *Parbat ke nakh pankhan*
dhar... (Guru Gobind Singh).

3.9 Reverential Status: Holy Quran Holy Granth Sahib

There is similarity in the way Islam and Sikhism regard their Holy Books as the final word: “After the Holy Quran, which other book is there in which people would place their faith?”(H.Q79: 50)

The Sikhs place their faith in Guru Granth Sahib as the ultimate Instruction. By Guru Gobind Singh’s final injunction the Sikhs were instructed to regard the holy Granth as the eternal Guru after Him.

3.10.1 Islam: Sura Al- Fatihah

“Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, The Beneficent, the Merciful. Owner of the Day of Judgment, Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help. Show us the straight path, the path of those whom Thou hast favoured; Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray”.⁴⁰

3.10.2 Sikhism: Mool Mantar

God is Unique. His Name⁴¹ is Truth. He is the Creator. He is devoid of fear and hatred. He is Everlasting. He is Unborn. He is Self-existent. He can be realised through the Grace of the Guru (the Enlightener).”⁴²

Islamic *Al-Ikhlās (At-Tawhīd)* is very close to the Sikh *Mool Mantar*. It is as follows:“ Say: He is Allah, the One! Allah, the eternally besought of all! He begetteth not nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him.”(HQ112: 1-4)

Like Sikhism the Holy Quran also names God as “Truth” (*Alleha-al Haq*)

3.11 Praise of God

“If all the trees in the earth become pens and the sea, with seven more seas to help it (were ink), the words of Allah could not be exhausted.” (HQ 31:27)

“Kabir, if I make the seven seas my ink, make the entire vegetation my pen and the earth my paper, even then I cannot write God’s

⁴⁰ ibsimlw ihr rwhmwinr rwhIm Alhmdo illw ribl AwlmIn inr
rwhImwn mwilk XwauimdIn eIXwkw
nwAbdo vw eIAwkw nYsqXIn iehidnw srwqulmusqkIm srwqul
lzInw AYn Amqw ALYihm
gYrlmZdUbI ALYihm vw AzwlInw - AwmIn (Translatin:Glorious Quran page 31)

⁴¹His Name: Many are His names, but His Name in Sikhism is **The Name**, which represents His

Being, the focus for meditation (*Naam simran*).

⁴² lE siq nwmu krqw purKu inBau inrvYru Akwl mUriq AjUnI sYBM
gur pRswid GGS p.1)

praises.” (GGS p.1368)⁴³

3.12 Intoxicants

The Holy Quran says: “They question thee about strong drink and games of chance. Say in both is great sin and some utility for me; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness.”(HQ 2:219 and 5:91)⁴⁴

“The misguided people who drink wine are the most foolish”⁴⁵
(GGS p. 399)

3.13 Family life; Monasticism

Both Sikhism and Islam recommend family life and deprecate monasticism and mendicancy.⁴⁶

“But monasticism they invented—we ordained it not for them—only seeking Allah’s pleasure and they observed it not with right reverence” (HQ57: 27)

Sikhism also rejects monasticism. “According to the Guru’s teaching what can be achieved outside home can also be achieved at home. So Nanak has become a renunciate” (GGS P.992)⁴⁷

“Seek salvation while you are living a normal life.”⁴⁸ (GGS p. 522)

⁴³ kbIr swq smuMdiH msu krau klm krau bn rwie bsuDw kwgd jau krau hir jsu ilKnu n jwie (pMnw

1368) . *Kabir sat samundeh mass karo kalam karo ban rai.....*(GGS p. 1368).

⁴⁴ The word used in the Holy Quran is Khmer. Some Muslim Scholars translate it as ‘Wine’ and

exclude drugs and liquors made from honey or barley. They translate verse 43 of Sura 4 as “O

believers, do not pray when you are drunken, until you know what you are saying” Most Muslim scholars however interpret the Quran to say that all kinds of inebriants and intoxicants

are strictly forbidden for the Muslims.

⁴⁵ durmiq mdu jo pIvqy ibKlI piqkmlI (pMnw 399) . *Durmatt madd jo pivtay.....*(GGS p. 399).

⁴⁶ Like the Sikh Gurus, Prophet Muhammad was also married and had children.

⁴⁷ gur bcnI bwhir Gr eyko nwnk BieAw audwsI (pMnw 992) .*Gur bachni bahar ghar Eko...*(GGS p. 992)

⁴⁸ hsMidAw KylMidAw pYnMidAw KwvMidAw ivcy hovY mukiq (pMnw 522) . *Hasandia, khelandia, painandia* (GGS p.522).

3.14 Need for a preceptor

Both stress the need for a guide or preceptor for union with God. Islam calls this medium *murshid*, *rahbar*, *pir* or *awliya*. “He who wants the companionship of God must first seek the company of the friends of God (*awliya*)” (Maulana Rumi)⁴⁹

Sikhism calls this source of inspiration the Guru or Satguru. “Even if there be hundreds of moons and thousands of suns, there will still be darkness without a Guru.” (GGS p.463)⁵⁰

In Sikhism, the Guru and the Guru’s Word (i.e. Gurbani in Guru Granth Sahib) are interchangeable. Human mediation was removed by the final injunction of Guru Gobind Singh: “Accept the Word in the Granth as your eternal Guru” He commanded

“Our mind is like a wild elephant roaming in a jungle (our body). The Guru’s true instruction acts like a goad on the unruly elephant (mind).” (GGS p. 221)⁵¹

However, Sikhism does not compel its followers to accept the Guru’s word blindly but accept it only after conviction.

“First evaluate and only then accept the wares.”⁵²(GGS p. 1410)

3.15 Settling disputes and making decisions

Islam and Sikhism both preach similar ways of settling differences. *Ijmah*⁵³ in Islam and *gurmatta* in Sikhism follow similar procedures, although, the latter, requires unanimous agreement in the presence

⁴⁹ hr ik ^uAwhd hmnSInI bw ^udw ,aU nSInd dr hzUr-ey- AOlIAw (jy r`b dy dIdwr dI ie`Cw hY qW mhW purKW dI sMgq kr)

⁵⁰ jy sau cMdW augvih sUrj cVih hjwr eyqy cwnx hoidAW gur ibnu Gor AMDwr (pMnw 463). *Je sao chanda ugveh, suraj chaday hazaar....*(GGS p. 463)

⁵¹ mn kuMcr kwieAw auidAwnY gur AMkus sc sbd nIswnY (pMnw 221). *Mann kunchar kaya udianay..*(GGS p. 221)

⁵² pihlw vsqu isM\wix kY qW kIcY vwpwru (pMnw 1410). *Pehla vast sinjan kai ta keecha y vapaar...*(GGS p 1410).

⁵³ “His rule is to discuss together” (H.Q 3:159,160)

of the Guru (Granth Sahib). Thus (unlike democratic processes) minority interests are safeguarded in Sikhism, albeit, at the expense of fewer decisions being made which qualify as *gurmattas*.

“O brothers, come sit together and sort out your differences” (GGS P.1185)⁵⁴

3.16 Charity; *Daswandh/Zakat*

Charity receives equal treatment in both religions. “Allah will shade a person under His shade who practises charity in such a way that nobody knows how much he has given in charity”(SB504 V2 V24). Even half a date-fruit given in charity can save a person from hell-fire (SB 448,449 V2 B24)

“ He who works hard honestly for what he eats, and shares it with others has found the true path. (GGS P.1245)⁵⁵

Daswandh in Sikhism and *zakat* (HQ 9:60) in Islam only differ in their application and *modus operandi*. *Zakat* is collected by the state but *daswandh* depends on a donor’s own discretion.

“The purpose of the *zakat* is no other than to provide the state with means to fund its welfare projects” (CIS page 141)

“*Zakat* is paid by individuals to Islamic governments, who arrange for its proper distribution to deserving people” (“Islam: faith & practice By Manazar Ahsan Page 18)

Daswandh (allocating one tenth of one’s earnings for religious or charitable purposes) is a Sikh tradition which receives mention in many authentic Sikh works which interpret the Guru’s teachings regarding the Sikh way of life.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ hoie iekqr imlhu myry BweI duibDw dUr krhu ilv lweI (pMnw 1185) . Hoi ekattar miloh meray
bhai..(GGS p.1185).

⁵⁵ Gwl Kwie ikCu hQhu dyih nwnk rwh pCwxih syie (pMnw 1245) .
Ghaal khai kish hathoh
deh...(GGS p. 1245)

⁵⁶ dsvMD gurU nw dyveI JUT bol jo Kwey, khy goibMd isMG lwI jI
iqs kw ko ivswih (qnKwh nwmwnMd
lwI) . *Daswandh Guru na dewaee jhooth bol jo khai....*(Tankhanama Bhai Nand Lal)

“Service in this world earns a place in God’s presence.” (GGS Page 26)⁵⁷

“The service rendered by the Guru's followers pleases the Guru.”⁵⁸
(Bhai Gurdas)

No other religion has an institution like the Sikh *Langar* where all are served food without discrimination or distinction. It is a training ground for selfless service.⁵⁹

3.17 Slander

Both religions condemn slanderers. The Holy Quran says “And do not find fault with each other, nor call one another by nicknames” (H.Q.49: 11-12)

There are many references to the sins of slanderers in Guru Granth Sahib.

“The slanderers will be treated as liars in God’s court and punished appropriately” (GGS p. 323)⁶⁰

“Numerous slanderers carry heavy burdens on their heads (of the sin of slander).” (GGS p. 4)⁶¹

iqs qy gur dsOND jo dyeI ,isMG so js vuh jg myN lyeI
(rihqnmw BweI dysw isMG) . *Tis te Gur*
dasondh jo dayee, Singh so jas voh jagg me layee (Rehatnama Bhai Desa Singh).
jo Apni ikC kry kmweI gur ihq dyhu dsvMD bnweI (rihqnmw BweI
cOpw isMG) . *Jo apni kish karay*

kamaee Gur hit deho....(Rehatnama Bhai Chaupa Singh).

⁵⁷ ivic dunIAw syv kmweIAY qw drgh bYsx pweIAY (pMnw 26) . *Wich dunia sev kamaiyay....*(GGS p.

26)

⁵⁸ gurmuk tihl kmwvxI siggurU ipAwri (BweI gurdws) . *Gurmukh tehal kamavni....*(Bhai Gurdas).

⁵⁹ There is a similar practice, to some extent, at the Dargahs of some Muslim Darveshes (mystics)

⁶⁰ :inMdk pkiV pCwiVAnu JUTy drbwry (pMnw 323) . *Nindak pakar paccharian jhoothay,*

Darbaaray (GGS p. 323)

⁶¹ “AsMK inMdk isr krih Bwr ”. (pMnw 4) . *Asankh nindak sir karay bhaar....*(GGS p. 4)

“A slanderer wastes this valuable life” (GGS p. 380)⁶²

3.18 Caste System

Islam and Sikhism are both against caste system. Since 80% of the Indian Muslims were converted from Hinduism; and most Sikhs also trace their background to Hindu families, both minority communities have been unsuccessful in rooting out the curse of the caste system completely.

3.19 Priesthood

There is no ordained priesthood in Islam and Sikhism. Anyone can perform any religious service. However, the position of women regarding performance of religious services seems to be quite different. For example, Guru Amar Das (Third Nanak) appointed 22 persons to act as preachers in 22 diocesan areas of authority (22 *Manjis*). Of these 22 persons, 8 were women appointees⁶³ a most remarkable demonstration of equality between the genders at the time in that socio-religious milieu. In Islam, women are not allowed to perform *azan* (loud call to the devotees to prayer.) Usually Muslim women do not visit the mosque.⁶⁴

3.20 Best religion

“Those who believe and do good deeds are the best of created beings (HQ 98:7)

“Of all religions, the best religion is to chant the Name of the Lord and to engage in pious deeds”⁶⁵ (GGS P.266)

⁶² “inMdk Aihlw jnm gvwieAw”. (pMnw 380) . *Nindak ahela janam gavaaya...*(GGS p. 380)

⁶³ Sikhs and Sikhism: a view with a bias by Dr I J Singh 2nd edition p. 137 (Centennial Foundation, Carden St., PO Box 96, Guelph, Ontario N1H 6L6, Canada.

⁶⁴ Women are supposed to pray at home and seldom, if ever, go to the mosque (History of religions E.O. James Page 196). They do not join in prayers publicly with men but perform their devotions at home. They visit the mosque only when men are not present there. The Prophet said, "Allow women to go to the mosque at night" (SB 22 V.2 B.13)

⁶⁵ srb Drm mih sRyst Drmu hir ko nwmu jip inrml krmu (pMnw 266)
.Sarab dharam meh sresat

dharam... (GGS p. 266).

CHAPTER 4

Scriptures

4.1 Guru Granth⁶⁶ Sahib

Guru Granth Sahib (GGS) is the Holy Book of the Sikhs and much more. The Sikhs seek daily guidance from the Word Guru⁶⁷ contained therein. Guru Gobind Singh (Nanak X, the final and 10th Guru personality⁶⁸) by his injunction formally passed⁶⁹ the Guruship to the Word Guru in GGS on 5 October 1708 (*Kartik Sudi 4, Samvat 1765*). Three days later he died (from stab wounds inflicted by an assassin) on the night of 7/8 October 1708. The process of impersonalisation of the Guru had been gradual. As early as the time of Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V), Bhai Gurdas, whose interpretation of *Gurbani* had the Guru's blessing, wrote that the Guru's personality was in the Guru's Word (i.e. the *Gurbani* in GGS)⁷⁰. The Guru manifests in the presence of the holy

⁶⁶Granth means a significant and (usually) authoritative book.

⁶⁷Sikhs do not worship body or matter (including a book) in any shape. A traditional dohra recited by the Sikhs with their Ardaas (supplication) directs the Sikhs to consider Guru Granth as the visible body of the Guru. It is written by Prahlad Singh, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, and wrongly attributed to the Guru by some misinformed people. The oft-repeated Dohra is a corrupt version of the original. Research students would wish to refer to the original wording in "Rehatnamay" by Piara Singh Padam at p.67. The original dohra reads "*Guru Khalsa manyo, pragat Guru Ki deh. Jo Sikh Mo milbo chahe, khoj inoh meh leh.*" And this is exactly what the Guru had preached.

⁶⁸The term Guru is a singular concept in Sikhism and means much more than a teacher of the Hindu tradition. Guru is synonymous with the Guru's Word (*Gurbani*) which represents the ultimate Truth and therefore represents the Creator. The tradition is that it was that same *Gurbani* which guided through all Guru human forms. To confirm the single entity of the Guru, all human Gurus described themselves as "Nanak". There is no distinction between the Guru and *Gurbani* (*Bani Guru, Guru hai Bani* - GGS p982).

⁶⁹"returned" would be more accurate as the Guru's Word or *Gurbani* was always accepted as the True Guru represented by each Guru personality from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh.

⁷⁰*gur mUrq gur Sbd hY ,swD sMgq ivc prgitAwieAw (BweI gurdws). Gur Moorat Gur Shabad hai..*(Bhai Gurdas)

congregation. Right from the time of Guru Nanak the personalized Guru had been in the process of removing himself from between the Word (*Shabad*) and the Sikh congregation (*Sangat*). Guru Nanak's vision of the new age society had no place for person Gurus, ordained clergy or any institution that smacked of self-aggrandisement. Guru Gobind Singh, therefore, by his unequivocal injunction, transferred the Guruship in the union between the *Shabad* and the Sikh *Sangat*, the collective body of the Khalsa Panth. His final instruction was:

"The Guru's spirit is in the Granth, body in the Panth (i.e. the Sikh nation), message in the Shabad (Gurbani), image in the Khalsa⁷¹ and protection of Akal (the *timeless* i.e. God)"⁷².

Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V) had the compilation of the *Adi Granth* scribed by Bhai Gurdas under his own supervision. The Granth, as it was popularly called, was completed by 15 August 1604. On 30 August in the same year, the Granth was formally installed in Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) and it was called Granth Sahib without the word Guru. However, from this date onwards the Guru in person always sat at a lower level than the Granth Sahib. The Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Nanak IX) was included in GGS by Guru Gobind Singh (Nanak X).

Guru Granth Sahib includes the hymns (*shabads*) of Nanak⁷³ I to V and IX, 15 Muslim and Hindu (lower and higher caste) saints (*bhagats*) and 15 Sikhs including 11 poet singers called Bhattas. In all there are 36 authors of GGS representing a geo-religious/social/lingual⁷⁴ cross section of the Indian society from the 12th to the 17th Centuries CE. It can be said to be a truly non-

⁷¹ *Amritdhari* Sikhs, Sikhs who have undergone the initiation Ceremony of Amrit and observe external and internal disciplines of Sikhism

⁷² *Awqmw gurU gRMQ ivc, sRIr pMQ ivc, prcw Sbd dw, dIdwr Kwlsy dw, Et Akwl dI. "Atma Guru Granth*

wich, sarir Panth wich, parcha Shabad da, didar Khalsay da, Ot Akal di" Nanak Chandra Udasi Mahankawyan by Dev Raj Sharma quoted in *Sau Sawal* by Satbir Singh p 55).

⁷³ Each of the ten Guru personalities referred to themselves as "Nanak" and the Guruship succession number indicated their position in the Guru lineage. Thus Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth

Guru is referred to as Nanak V.

⁷⁴ The number of GGS languages/dialects is almost certainly over 50 (one scholar has mentioned

58 languages.)

sectarian compilation of the highest human values and the underlying truth behind apparently different religious ideologies. Nowhere in the whole GGS the Guru belittles the message underlying any religion. The strict instruction to the Sikhs is:

“Call not the vedas and the Quran false. Those who do not contemplate them are false” (GGS Page 1350)⁷⁵

The Sikh Gurus employed the vehicle of verse to preach their religion which according to Macauliffe “is generally unalterable by copyists and we have even become familiar with their different styles. No spurious composition or extraneous dogmas can, therefore, be represented as theirs..... It would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or a more comprehensive ethical system.”⁷⁶

With few exceptions, (Guru Nanak’s *Japuji* is an exception), *shabads* (hymns in GGS) are written in 31 classical *raags* (musical octaves representing moods of times of the day or seasons.) selected for their meditative, peaceful and harmonious qualities. The selection is also representative of Islamic and Hindu *bhagti* movements⁷⁷. *Raags* arousing extreme moods or passions have not been included. There is a great variety and richness in the poetry, rhythm and beat in the *Gurbani* of GGS, which represent different regions, literatures and popular folk music (*dhunees*). Nevertheless, the criteria for selection are based on the tranquility, meditation-inspiring qualities of these beats and rhythms.

GGS is written in the Gurmukhi script. It contains 5,763 hymns⁷⁸(*shabads*, *saloks* and *sawayyas*) and has 1,430 numbered pages. Continuous reading of GGS takes about 48 hours and this is done during the ceremony of *Akhand Paath* (which means “continuous reading”). The languages include Panjabi (main language), Sindhi, Marathi, Brij, Hindi, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apbhransh, Arabic and Persian.

⁷⁵ *Ved kiteb kaho matt jhutha jhutha jo na vichare* (GGS Page 1350)

⁷⁶ Macauliffe “The Sikh Religion” Vol.1 Introduction P. iii-iv Low price Publications

⁷⁷ Dr Taran Singh, “Sikh, Sikhi ate’ Sidhant”, p 193-4; Punjabi publication by SGPC 1991.

⁷⁸ “Sao Sawal” by Satbir Singh, p 37.

The significance of GGS is that it accepts the great contribution made by earlier religious literature evolved in parallel with human thought evolution and builds on that common heritage of humankind⁷⁹. GGS looks ahead at the future of mankind as a global God-loving society, and not so much a God-fearing society. “Worship the Lord fearlessly,” said the Guru⁸⁰. Generally, the comprehensive whole-life discussion and the guidance contained in GGS is not based on fear, or, reward and punishment, albeit, there are occasional reminders of these realities also. The Guru, by accepting the human child as a responsible adult, concentrated more on those universal responsibilities which the new age (the age of discovery, science and technology and the age of material progress) was about to heap on human shoulders. Such advancement in human knowledge was to be complemented by a parallel advancement in spiritual knowledge and self-regulation.

“Sikh Scriptures are the product of sustained thinking and mature reflection, superb inspiration and profound realisation of saints and prophets”⁸¹. That is the great significance of Guru Granth Sahib. Not only is the Guru Granth Sahib the only original teaching which was communicated directly from a guru (enlightened prophet or master) to his followers but it is also a theology that is universal in nature and content. It is intentionally a collation of the highest human values. Thus, we can say that ultimately, for a Sikh God is the **profound realisation** based on *mature* reflection of saints and prophets regardless of their religion, caste, class or status in human society.

Guru Granth Sahib is not structured as a logical development of a thematic religious philosophy. In this respect there is similarity between the Holy Quran and Guru Granth Sahib. It does not mean, however, that the Sikh thought pattern could not be built systematically from Guru Granth Sahib. Such interpretation can seek further authentic guidance from the works of Bhai Gurdas, who

⁷⁹ Dr Taran Singh “Sikh Sikhi ate’ Sidhant”, p. 192; Punjabi publication by SGPC 1991.

⁸⁰ *Nirbhau hoi bhajo Bhagwan*, GGS p 201. This theme is repeated e.g. at GGS pages 181, 684, 622.

⁸¹ *A Critique of Sikhism*, by S Gurmit Singh Sirsa, Advocate P.8

scribed the compilation of the Granth Sahib under the directions of Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V). The general pattern of Guru Granth Sahib is as follows:

- (a) Description of the Ultimate Reality or Truth called by many names.
- (b) Longing of the human soul for merging with Truth. This union is the main purpose of human life;
- (c) How this Ultimate Reality may be reached and experienced;
- (d) The happy experience of those who obtain this Reality; and,
- (e) The sad plight of those who do not, and, therefore, waste their precious human lives.

GGs covers matters dealing with daily lives, and also spiritual way of life.

4.1.1 Dasam Granth

Another religious book attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, called the Dasam Granth, never acquired the same status as Guru Granth Sahib. Doubt about the authenticity of many compositions in this Granth remains. It was published a few years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh and the hymns were collected from various sources. However, there is agreement only on some compositions, which are clearly those of the Tenth Master. They are often recited by the Sikhs and two, (the *Jaap Sahib* and *10 Swayias* starting “*Sravag Sudh smooH sidhan ke....*”) are included in the daily recitations made obligatory by the Sikh code of discipline, the *Rehat Maryada*⁸².

There is no detailed code like the Muslim *Hadis* except for the Sikh code of *Rehat Maryada*. The instruction to the Sikhs is “Do what the Guru has ordained. Why chase the Guru’s actions which you are unable to comprehend?” (GGs p. 933)⁸³

⁸²*Sikh Rehat Maryada* (P) published by the Dharam Parchaar Committee of the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee; 24th edition October, 1998.

⁸³ *guir kihAw sw kwr kmwvhu gur kI krxI kwhy Dwvhu (pMnw 933) . Gur kahia sa kar kamavoh....*(GGs p. 933)

4.2 The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran is the Sacred Book of Islam and, for a Muslim, the Word of God. It is the “final expression of God’s will and purpose for man.”⁸⁴ It contains the revelations communicated by God to Prophet Muhammad. The Quran had been sent down “confirming that which (was revealed) before it,” a reference to the Torah (Jewish scriptures) and the Gospel (Christian scriptures). (HQ 6:93)

Muslims believe that revelation is of two kinds: *wahi jali* (obvious and clearly revealed to the senses) and *wahi khafi* (mystical - comprehended by the receiver only). The Holy Quran is *wahi jali* and the *Hadis* (ibid) is *wahi khafi*. The Quran⁸⁵ is called “*Al-Quran*”. Other names given to it are *Quran Sharif*, *Quran Majeed* and *Quran-e-Karim*. In the Quran itself the name given to it is *Furqan-Al-Kitab* (The criterion-Sura 25). The Muslims believe that Quran was recorded on *Loh-e-Mehfooz* (preserved tablet) by God before the creation of the world (HQ85: 21-22) and Jibrael uttered the Quran in the Prophet’s ear by degrees. “We reveal the scripture unto thee as an exposition of all things”(HQ 16:89)

The Holy Quran has 114 *suras*, 29 of which start with a letter or letters the meaning of which is divinely confidential.⁸⁶ The *suras* are named after a person, object or an incident.⁸⁷ Every *sura* bears the words *Mecci* or *Madni* indicating whether the Prophet received it in

⁸⁴ The Quran Interpreted by Arthur J Arberry, Oxford University Press, 1983.

⁸⁵ Literally Quran means “Spoken word”. On page 14 of the book ‘Muhammad Arabi’ by Barkatullah it is recorded with reference to Sahih Muslim that the Prophet said, “Do not record what you hear from me .If you have recorded anything already then destroy it.” “And thou (O Muhammad) was not a reader of any scripture before it, nor didst thou write it with the right hand, for then might those have doubted who follow falsehood”(HQ 19:48)

⁸⁶ For example HQ2 Alif, Lam, Mim.HQ10 Alif, Lam, Ray. Seven Suras start with Ha, Mim. Sura 50 starts with only one letter Kaf. Some people speculate that these letters represent the names of the scribes.

⁸⁷ Some Suras are based on a word that appears in the Sura (i.e. Sura Al-Anam),some are named after personalities (i.e. Sura 12 Yusuf, Sura 47 Muhammad, Sura 14 Abraham),some others are named after stories of past prophets (i.e. Sura Hud tells stories of Hud, Aad, Salih, Samud & Shoaib etc and Sura 18 *Al-Kahf* tells the story of young men who like seven sleepers of Ephesus, slept for years in a cave),some Suras are based on incidents (i.e. Sura *Al-Anfal* is about the battle of Badr and Sura 66 *At-Tahrim* is based on an incident of the Prophet with his wives). Some other Suras are ‘The Cow,’ ‘The Bee,’ ‘Smoke,’ ‘Iron’, and ‘The Elephant’

Mecca or Medina.⁸⁸ *Suras* start with the words, “*Bismillah hir Rehman ir Rahim* (In the name of Allah who is beneficent and merciful) except *Sura 9 (Al- Tauba- Repentance)* where these words do not appear. *Suras* are divided into *ayats* (verses) and a group of *ayats* is called a *spara*. *Sparas* are further divided into *rakuhaat*. The arrangement of the *suras* is not chronological⁸⁹. The first one is *Sura Al-Fatihah*, which has only seven *ayats*. In the first half of the Quran many *ayats* refer to internecine struggles of the Quraish and many of those in the second half concern troubles with Jews and Christians. It took the whole Quran 23 years to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad. In all it has 6666 *ayats*.

“ This is in truth the word of an honoured messenger”(HQ81: 19).
 “It is not a poet’s speech- little is it that ye believe! No diviner’s speech-little is that ye remember! It is revelation from the Lord of the worlds.” (HQ 69: 40-43)

After the death of Prophet Muhammad many, who had learnt the Quran by heart (*Hafiz or Qari*), were killed in the battle of Yamama⁹⁰. Caliphs Abu Bakar and Omar sent messages to the followers to collect the verses of the Quran from people’s chests,⁹¹ stones, scraps of parchment, ones of camel’s shoulder blades and hides where they had been recorded. Zaid Ibn Thabit and three other people collated the hymns⁹² and passed them on to the Prophet’s wife Bibi Hafsa. When the work was finished (651CE) she passed it on to

⁸⁸ The *Suras* at the beginning of the Holy Quran (With the exception of *Sura 1*) are longer than those coming at the end. For example *Sura 2 Al Baqarah* (The Cow) has 286 *ayats* whereas *Suras Al Nsr, Al-Kauthur & Al -Asr* have only 3 *ayats* each. The first 19 *Suras* cover nearly the whole of the Quran. *Sura Baqarah* can be called the gist of the whole Quran.

⁸⁹ *Suras* that were received in Medina sometimes come before and sometimes after those received in Mecca. Some Quranic stories for example those of Adam, Yusuf and Abraham are also found in the Bible. Some passages are also similar for example *Sura Maida 7:3* and *exodus 21:23-25* and *Sura Iraf 5-1* and *Mark 10-25*. As for the arrangement, the Quran itself says, “And we have arranged it in right order”(HQ25:32)

⁹⁰ According to one estimate 700 *Qaris* who knew the Holy Quran by heart died in this battle.

⁹¹ Quite a number of *suras* were not written down at all, but were memorized by those standing by They were then transcribed, and had added to them what could be gathered from the “hearts of men” (100 Great Books by John Canning page 82-83) . According to John Canning about the year 650 AD copies of the collated Quran were deposited at Damascus, Basra and Kufa the then capitals of Muslim empires . The original copy was kept at Medina.

⁹² Most manuscripts were available from (1) Hazrat Abdullah Bin-Masud (2) Hazrat Ali (3) Waqa bin Naufil and (4) Prophet’s wife Bibi Hafsa and. Zaid. The other members of the committee were (1) Saad bin Ass (2) Abdullah Bin-Zabera (3) Abdul-Rehman bin Haris bin Hasham

Hazrat Usman, who prepared copies and ordered all original sources to be destroyed.⁹³

Muslims believe that the present Quran contains all genuine verses and that nothing has been left out. Some people, however, argue that the Holy Quran itself contradicts some verses written in the Quran. The number of such verses is reported to be 225. Muslim scholars say that they had been cancelled (*mansukh*) by the Prophet after having been received⁹⁴.

“If ye are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto our slave (Muhammad), then produce a Sura of the like thereof, and call your witness beside Allah if ye are truthful” (HQ 2:23, 10:39, 11:13 and 17: 88)

The Quran gives 99 names of God which are known as *Isam-al-hasna* some of them are Allah, Rahim, Rehman, Ghafar, Razaq, Latif, Jameel and Karim. About its authenticity and excellence the Quran says, “This book is handed down from Allah⁹⁵,” (HQ: 40:1-3).

Muslims also believe that from time to time God sent instructions to Adam (HQ 2:37), Abraham, Hazrat Musa, Hazrat Dawd, Jesus Christ (HQ 5:46) which all got corrupted. Only the Holy Quran is the uncorrupted revelation and is the last Book from God. No book will come from God after the Holy Quran.

⁹³ Devout Muslims believe that every dot and dash in the Holy Quran had been faithfully recorded and no verse was left out. However by the beginning of the tenth Century there were seven recognised texts in the field. Prophet Muhammad said, “Gabriel read the Quran to me in one way (i.e. dialect) and I continued asking Him in different ways till He read it in seven different ways” (SB 442). The present version was fixed in 933 CE. (Materials for the History of the text of the Quran’ Jeffrey Page 1- 10)

⁹⁴ “Such of our revelations as We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring (in place) one better or the like thereof. Knowest thou not that Allah is able to do all things”? (HQ 2:106). Az Zubair said to Uthman bin Affan (While he was collecting the verses of the Holy Quran): what is the point in recording the abrogated verses? Uthman said, “O son of my brother! I will not shift anything of it from its place” (SB 53 & 60 V.6 B.60)

⁹⁵ The word ‘Allah’ was in use before the advent of Prophet Muhammad. Herodotus (chapter 3-8) wrote Allaat and Deodorus (60 BC) called Mecca Bait-Allah (God’s house). The name Abdullah (abad+allah =The Sword of God) was very common. The custom of Hajj (Annual pilgrimage), eating of Halal, belief in Jinns and cutting the hands of thieves were all prevalent before Prophet Muhammad. Namaz (prayer) was also common and the followers of Zarathustra (The Parsees) conducted five prayers.

Words have a great significance in all religions and cultures and Islam places great importance on the use of original Arabic words in Muslim prayer. These words have compelling power for the devout Muslims in inducing “mystic consciousness.”⁹⁶ For example the heart beat says “*Allah*” and the *hum* or wind in the brain suggests the word “*hu*” and the combination “*Allah hu*” induces a mystique consciousness for the believer.

4.2.1 Hadis (Plural Ahadis)

The *Ahadis* exercise detailed control over the daily routines and lives of the followers. They inform, teach, or prescribe reward or punishment. These are *Sahih-al-Bukhari* (870 CE), *Sahih-Muslim* (875 CE)⁹⁷, *Sunan-Ibn-Maaja* (886 CE), *Sunan-Abu-Daud* (888 CE), *Jami-at-Trimidi* (892 CE), and *Sunan-an-Nisai* (915 CE). Later *Mishkwat-al-Masabih* (of Abu Muhammad al-Harain-bin-Masud), *Muwatta* (of Imam Malik) and *Asnad* (of Ahmed-bin-Hanbal) were produced and became very well known.⁹⁸

According to Bukhari, out of a total of 600,000 *Ahadis*, which he collected only 7275 could be true and out of them only 4,000 were found to be authentic. Abu Dawd collected 500,000 *Ahadis* and later accepted only 4,000 of them. Most of the *Ahadis* were collected from Abu-Huraira who accepted Islam four years before the Prophet’s death.

Some examples from the *Ahadis* are:

“Sang-e-Aswad (The black stone) came from *Firdaus* (Heaven) and was whiter than milk. It became black because of the sins of Adam’s progeny.” (Trimidhi through Ibn Abbas)

⁹⁶ MT Akbar’s Chapter on “Islamic Culture” in “The Cultural Heritage of India” p. 576

⁹⁷ In 875 CE Aljama Al Shaibh of Nayasapur produced another Hadis which is authentic but not as popular as Sahih Bukhari or Sahih Muslim.

⁹⁸ The Shia Muslims do not accept these *Ahadis*. Their *Ahadis* are (1) Kafi by Abu Jafer Muhammad Kalini (329H) (2) Min La Yathizra- al-Fiqah of Sheikh Ali Ibn Bawevia (3 and 4) Tehzib (466H) and Istabsar (406H) by Sheikh Abu Jafer Muhammad Toosi (5) Nahaj-al-Balaghat by Sayyed Razi (406H). The later also includes Hazrat Ali’s sayings.

“He, who builds a mosque for Allah, is offered a house in *Firdaus*” (SB & SM)”

“Cursed is the thief who steals an egg. His hand should be chopped off. And anybody who steals a rope should also have his hand cut off.” (SB and SM)

“Do not eat meat by using a knife. This is done by the foreigners.” (Abu-Dawd) “Yunas said that the Prophet had forbidden the drinking of water while standing.” (Sahih Muslim)

“You should not eat or drink with your left hand because it is used by the *Shaitan* (SM 5010, SB 288 V.7 B.65).

4.3 Pillars of Sikhism

“Sikh” means “seeker after the Truth”⁹⁹. The three main pillars of the Sikh way of life are:

- Meditation on the One Absolute Truth (*Naam japna*);
- Earning livelihood through honest work (*kirat karni*); and,
- Sharing one’s earnings with the needy (*wand shakna*).

The purpose of life is to serve the Lord’s creation with love¹⁰⁰ (*sewa*) in order to achieve salvation. This requires a fully participative approach to life. Service rendered in this world is considered the path to salvation. Sikh Scriptures promote a steady, middle-path vision of life (the *sahij* approach).

4.4 Pillars of Islam

The five pillars of Islam are **Confession of faith** (saying the Tayyab kalima), **prayer**, **Fasting**, **Zakat (charity)** and **Hajj**

⁹⁹ In Sikhism, as distinct from any other connotations of the literal meaning of the word, one who is seeking the Truth, following the path shown by Guru Nanak, is a Sikh. (*Mai badhi sach dharamsal hai, GurSikhan laha bhal kay* GGS p.73). Also see *Sau Sawal* by Prof Satbir Singh p.21. In the Hindu tradition, the word *sikh* means a *shish* i.e. a student or disciple of a guru

¹⁰⁰ Sewa means service with devotion and is a peculiarly Sikh concept. It must be selfless, non-discriminatory and done in humility without expectation of any reward.

(pilgrimage), Every Muslim must visit Mecca at least once in lifetime if not more often.

CHAPTER 5

God, Prayers and Creation

The concept of God in both religions is very similar but with notable differences mentioned at Chapter 1.

5.1 God in Sikhism

The concept of One omnipotent, omniscient, timeless Creator has similarity between Sikhism and Islam. Guru Nanak's perception of the Absolute Truth, the basic creed referred to as the *Mool Mantar*, on which is then based the whole philosophy of Sikhism and Guru Granth Sahib, is as follows:

“God is positive One, unique, all Truth, the Creator, devoid of fear, devoid of animosity and hatred, Immortal, everlasting, Unborn, the Self-Existent, the Benevolent Enlightener”¹⁰¹. Meditate on His Name and recite: He *was* the Truth, *is* the Truth and *forever* shall be the Truth.”

There are numerous other references to the Oneness of God in Guru Granth Sahib, e.g. “My Lord is One, One and the only One O brother.” (GGS p.350)

“This is His quality: that there has been no other, nor will there be any other in future (but Him).” (GGS P.349)¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ The words “Gur Prasad” have been translated in two ways: (1) like the preceding words of the Mool Mantar as adjectives for God, “the Enlightener, the One who bestows favours on” (Gur = the Enlightener, and Prasad = Karim, One who bestows favours or bounties on all. See “prasad” with “sihari” in “Mahan Kosh” Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha); and (2) more commonly as “through the grace of the Guru”. The usual rule for interpreting a string of items in the same genre would suggest that “the Benevolent Enlightener” would be more correct and less vedic in import i.e. misleading regarding the need for “a Guru”, readily misinterpreted by some as “human guru”!

¹⁰² *Sahib mera eko hai, eko hai bhai eko hai* (GGS 350) *Goon eho hor nahi koi, na ko hoa, na ko hoi* (GGS 349)

Sikhism accepts God as both within and without creation. God is transcendent (*Nirgun*) and is also immanent (*Sargun*). He does not take birth and He is everyone's One and Only God.

God is in timeless meditation in His absolute state. He himself is the Creator and himself the one who looks back on his creation (through the created). (GGS P.290)¹⁰³

God is an expression of profound wonderment: *Waheguru!* (*Wah!* an expression of speechless amazement and "*hey-Guru*" means "O Enlightener"¹⁰⁴). He is called by many popular names describing His qualities e.g. *Ik Onkar* (The One Creator), *Akal Purakh* (The Timeless One) and *Sat Kartar* (the True Creator of everything). In Guru Granth Sahib, God is called by many Islamic and Hindu names also.

"Who can say all His Names; He is described only by those of His qualities which are manifest through His creation." (Guru Gobind Singh)¹⁰⁵

For a Sikh, it does not matter which one of the countless names of God are used to remember Him provided He is the God described in the *Mool Mantar* (see above). Thus, while a human being may reflect certain godly qualities, no being can ever be regarded as an incarnation of God, for God is outside the cycle of birth and death.

However, the Guru did not accept certain names for God, which would imply negative human traits such as "*Al-Muzil*" (The giver of disgrace)¹⁰⁶ used in Islam

¹⁰³ *Sargun Nirgun Nirankar, sun samadhi Aap. Apan kia Nanaka, Aape hi fir jaap.* (GGS 290)

¹⁰⁴ Thus the word "Guru" used in Sikh Scriptures (Sri Guru Granth Sahib) refers to God as the one who enlightens. In this sense the meaning of the word is different from the traditional meaning which is "teacher". See section 7.1 "Guru in Sikhism".

¹⁰⁵ *Tav sarab naam kathe kavan, karam naam barnat sumat.* (*Jaap Sahib*, Guru Gobind Singh)

¹⁰⁶ "Whoever makes a prayer for protection after saying this name of Allah 75 times, Allah will

protect him from the harms of envious persons, oppressors and enemies" *Al-hisnal Hasin*
By
Muhammad Al-Jazri 1993

5.2 God in Islam

The Central belief of Islam is (a) *Tawhid*: God is unique and (b) *Risalah*: Muhammad is his Messenger. *La ilaha illallah Muhammad-ar- rasul Allah* is recited in the baby's ear at birth and every Muslim expects these words to be recited in his/her ear at death. These two linked concepts, however, do not occur in the Holy Quran together. They are from Sura Muhammad (47-19) and Sura-*Al-Fath* (HQ 48:29)

The Holy Quran emphasizes the need for continuous remembrance of God: "naught is as His likeness; and He is the hearer, the seer" (HQ 42:11). He cannot be understood by the vision, yet He understands all vision. Believers must not allow themselves to forget Allah by preoccupation with wealth or children; for they will be the losers if they do. "Therefore remember me, I will remember you. Give thanks to me, and reject not Me"(HQ2: 152) says the Holy Quran.

The main objective of man in this life is to worship God. "Flee unto Allah; Lo I am a plain Warner unto you for Him" (HQ 51:50)."He who holdest fast to Allah, he indeed is guided unto a right path "(HQ3: 101)

The Arabic word *abadun* used in the Holy Quran is a reminder that man should regard himself as a slave of God. However, to reach this state of humility, man has to first understand God, subject only to his own human limitations. Man's success in this life therefore depends on how much "Godly knowledge" he has been able to acquire and how much of that knowledge equates with the absolute truth about God. Devout Muslim scholars therefore argue that (unlike earlier religions) arrival of Islam heralded the era of the empirical method of inductive logic leading on to a vast improvement in mathematics and science.¹⁰⁷

Development of an understanding of the great work of God and of the boons that He has given for mankind's benefit, is encouraged; however, severe is the God's punishment for those who set up rivals to God as objects of worship. For such infidels and sinners Allah is

¹⁰⁷MT Akbar's Chapter on "Islamic Culture" in "The Cultural Heritage of India" p. 571

severe in punishment. (HQ2: 160-61). “O Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern with them. Hell will be their home, hapless journey’s end” (HQ 66:9).

Allah rewards those who believe in Him and those who are given knowledge and He is aware of all our deeds. Acquisition of knowledge of the universe and nature is also necessary for feeling the awe (or stupendous wonderment) at His creation and thus realisation of His power and vastness. God is omnipotent and omniscient (HQ6: 104). Everything that goes on anywhere and everywhere is within His notice and is recorded. (HQ 6:59-60)

The word *dhikr* in the Holy Quran for remembrance is significant and covers the full spectrum from a passing thought to actual vision of God as in the case of one who is “God-intoxicated” and called a *majzoo*. Rules laid down by the Holy Quran for attunement with God must be strictly and unreservedly observed for success. Methods for meditation (*muraqaba*) are meticulously prescribed.

Those who do not believe in the Quran are known as *Kafir*. This word is derived from *Kufr*, which means “to conceal truth or to be ungrateful”. The word *Kafir* is usually used for non-Muslims “whoso disbelieveth in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and his messengers and the Last day, he verily is a *Kafir*.” (HQ4: 136)¹⁰⁸

5.3 Prayer in Sikhism

Early morning meditation on the Lord’s Name after bath has the greatest spiritual merit in the Sikh tradition. The Sikhs are expected to become and remain God conscious with every breath. Their prayers exhort the Sikhs for self-exploration, self-knowledge and spirituality. They are enjoined to recite and ponder the following five compositions of the Guru, to aid God remembrance and the running of their daily lives in accordance with the Guru’s Word (Gurmatt):

¹⁰⁸ “Those who grow violent in disbelief, their repentance will not be accepted. The whole earth full of gold would not be accepted from such an one if it were offered as a ransom.” (HQ 3:90-91)

Morning: *Japuji Sahib*, *Jaap Sahib* and *Ten Swayyas*.¹⁰⁹

Evening: *Rahiras* in the evening

Bed time: - *Sohila* before going to bed

(From SGPC *Rehat Maryada* (P); 24th edition, 1998)

A bath before the morning prayers and general cleanliness is part of the Sikh discipline code of *Rehat Maryada*. Yet, there may be mitigating circumstances when the ablutions and the prayer routine may not be possible or only partially possible. This is acceptable provided there is a return to the prescribed (*rehat*) routine at the earliest opportunity. However, it is also expected that the mind be attuned to God. All rituals are meaningless:

“What good is your purification (*wuzu*)? Why do you wash your face? Why do you bother to bow your head in the mosque? If your heart is full of hypocrisy what good are your prayers or your pilgrimage to Mecca?” (GGS p. 1350)¹¹⁰

The Sikhs may recite their prayers sitting on the floor (floor covering e.g. a mat or a carpet, of any type may be used) when in congregation; or in a chair or even while walking (or driving etc.) when alone. They also do the standing prayer (supplication) to the Lord for the well being of all human beings after the morning and evening recitations and after every service in the Gurdwara. Generally, unlike Islam, Sikhism is not prescriptive about adopting any postures when praying. When saying prayers in the presence of their Holy Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, Sikhs face the Granth.

Hindu and Muslim names for God are used freely in Guru Granth Sahib. However, the truly descriptive and most often repeated Sikh names are “Waheguru” (The Wonderful Enlightener), and the “Ik Onkar” (the One Positive Singularity which resides in creation and which is the cause of all creation). The mainstream Sikh Khalsa ideals flow from the latter description of the positive reality of the Creator and the created.

¹⁰⁹ In addition Gursikhs also recite ‘Anand sahib’ and ‘Benti Chaupai’ with morning and evening prayers

¹¹⁰ *Kia uju paak kia munh dhoya, kia maseet sir niaya* (GGS P.1350)

5.3.1 Prayer in Islam

The Muslims worship Allah by *taqwa*: an awareness of God and communication with God at all times. They have five prescribed daily prayers¹¹¹ as follows

- 1) *Fajar* (before sunrise) Adam was promised a “merit” (explained below) of 20,000 Hajj for this prayer.
- 2) *Zuhar* (noon) Abraham was promised a merit of 40,000 Hajj for this prayer.
- 3) *Asar* (afternoon) Noah was promised a merit of 60,000 Hajj for this prayer.
- 4) *Maghrib* (at sunset) Jesus was promised a merit of 80,000 Hajj for this prayer.
- 5) *Isha* (night prayer). Moses was promised a merit of 100,000 Hajj for this prayer.¹¹²

On Fridays *Zuhar* prayer is omitted and instead *Juma* prayer is performed. A merit of 1,000,000 Hajj was promised to Prophet Muhammad for this prayer.¹¹³

The concept of Hajj “merit” needs to be understood in terms of deep faith. Going to holy Mecca on pilgrimage (Hajj) is considered a highly meritorious religious act, which adds to the spiritual credit of a soul. It is in this sense that the great power of sincere prayer by a true Muslim devotee needs to be understood.

Before each prayer, ritual washing (*wuzu*) is necessary (HQ5: 6). If water is not available then *tayamum* (washing with dry sand or

¹¹¹ Before Prophet Muhammad, the Jews also had (and still have) five prayers. They call it Rataav.

Parsees also say prayers five times a day.

¹¹² The times of these prayers are not mentioned in the Holy Quran. They have been fixed on the basis of *Ahadis*. In addition to these, some Muslims also observe *Salat-al-Ishraq* (after sunrise), *Salat-al-Zuha* (at 11 A.M.) and *Salat-al-Tahajjud* (at midnight) prayers (HQ 50:40,52:49). It is said that the Prophet was given 50 prayers by God. On his return to the 6th heaven he met Moses. Moses said that 50 were too many and the Prophet’s *Umma* would not accept them. The Prophet went back to God and asked Him to reduce the number of compulsory prayers to five.

¹¹³ This is because Adam was created on this day and it was on this day again that he entered Paradise. See Sahih Muslim 1856.

earth) is done.¹¹⁴ Both palms are placed on the ground and then rubbed on the face. The act of dry washing of arms up to the elbows is then performed. The Muslims must face towards Mecca while performing their prayers (HQ2: 149) “ We shall make thee turn (in prayer) toward a Qibla which is dear to thee (HQ2: 144)

Muslims must “bow” seven joints/bone structures when praying. These are “the hands, the knees, the extremities of the feet and forehead” (SM 991) “People should avoid lifting their eyes skywards while praying, If they do their eyes will be snatched away” (Sahih Muslim 863).

While praying the Muslims must not raise their heads from the ground before the *Imam* does. “Does the man who lifts his head before the Imam not fear that Allah may change his face into that of an ass”? (SM 860 SB660 V.1 B.11)¹¹⁵

“There are ninety-nine names of Allah. He who commits them to memory would get into paradise” said the Prophet. (SM 6475) “Why ninety nine?” somebody asked. “Because God is odd (*witr*) and loves odd number” explained Prophet Muhammad. (SM 6476)

5.4 Creation according to Sikhism

Before creation there was nothing but God in His abstract (*nirgun*) state.

“For countless ages there was utter darkness. There was no earth and no sky but Infinite Lord’s will alone was pervasive.” (GGS p. 1035)¹¹⁶ Creation took place by His will.

“With one Word He caused the expansion (of the universe) to take place. From this flowed countless streams (of creative activity).”

¹¹⁴ “When you do not find water then perform Tayammum with clean earth (Sura *Al-Maida* also see SB 343)

¹¹⁵ “Strengthen your rows or Allah will alter your faces” Said the Prophet. (SB 68 V.1 B.11)

¹¹⁶ *Arbad narbad dhundookara. Dharan na gagna Hukam apara* (GGS p.1035)

(GGS p. 3)¹¹⁷ “Heavenly bodies like the sun and the moon are moving countless miles in awe (in God’s will)”. (GGS p. 464)¹¹⁸
 “The One God created the creation. The regions, the continents all worlds and planes of existence, they all came into being from God’s Word.” (GGS p. 1003)¹¹⁹ “The True Lord created air. Air gave rise to water. Life sprouted forth from water and His Spirit governs evolutionary process in the whole of His creation.”(GGS p.19)¹²⁰

According to Sikhism there are countless earths, moons and suns and other planets in existence. “There are numerous forms of life and numerous are their modes of speech.”¹²¹

5.4.1 Creation according to Islam

According to Islam God said, “*Kun Fayakoon*” and everything came into existence. “When He saith ‘be’ it is.” (HQ 6:73,16:40) “Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then we parted them, and we made everything of water”?” (HQ21: 30).

Islamic belief is that the universe was created in stages. According to Islam, God “created the heavens and the earth in six days. (HQ10: 4,7: 55, 11:7, and 50: 38) “There are seven skies” (HQ2: 29, 65:12)¹²². Allah created the clay on Saturday, mountains on Sunday, trees on Monday, things entailing labour on Tuesday, light on Wednesday, animals on Thursday, Adam after Asr (afternoon prayer) on Friday (SM 6707)¹²³

¹¹⁷ *Kita pasao eko kawao. Tis te hoi lakh dariao.* (GGS P.3)

¹¹⁸ *Bhai wih sooraj bhai wih chand. Koh karori chalat na ant* (GGS p. 484).

¹¹⁹ *Khand deep sabh loa, ek kawawe te sabh hoa* (GGS p.1003)

¹²⁰ *Sachay tay pavna bhia pavnay tay jal hoe.....* (GGS p. 19)

¹²¹ *Kete ind chand sur kete, kete mandal des.....* (Japuji, GGS p. 7))

¹²² Prophet Muhammad is said to have made a journey to the throne of God in the seventh heaven from *Kaaba* (History of the Punjab, Punjabi University page 22) For a similar story in Hinduism refer to Arjuna’s journey to heaven and hell in *Indra Lok Gamanang*.

¹²³ “Say (O Muhammad unto the idolaters): disbelieve ye verily in Him who created the earth in two days, and ascribe ye unto Him rivals? He (and none else) is the Lord of the worlds. He placed therein firm hills rising above it, and blessed it and measured therein its substance in four days, alike for (all) who ask. Then turned he to heaven when it was smoke, and said unto it and unto the earth: come both of you, willingly or loth. They said: we come, obedient. Then he ordained them seven heavens in two days”.(HQ 41:9-12).According to Sura 17 (*Bani Israel*) the Prophet went through all seven heavens to see God (See The Glorious Quran page 204) Having completed the creation Allah wrote in his book “My Mercy overpowers My Anger”(SB 416)

Humans were created from wet black speaking clay (HQ15: 27, 23: 12-14) and *Shaitan* was created from fire and smoke.

CHAPTER 6

Sacred places; Pilgrimage; Rituals and sacrifice

6.1 Sacred places of the Sikhs

There are many historical centres of great significance for the Sikhs. However, they are not places of pilgrimage in the same sense as the Islamic (and Hindu) traditions. The concept that God “resides” in any one place of worship to the exclusion of any other place is rejected in Sikhism. Likewise Sikhism does not accept that bathing at a certain place of pilgrimage (e.g. in water tanks adjoining temples) will wash sins. According to *Gurbani*, “The perfect Lord fills all creation: in water and dry land the Lord is all pervading.”¹²⁴ (GGS p.617) “If salvation can be achieved by bathing in water, then a frog is better off. He remains in water all the time.”(GGS p. 484)¹²⁵ “My sacred shrine of pilgrimage is the Name of the Lord” (GGS p. 1142)¹²⁶

The main historical and theo-political centre of the Sikhs is the *Darbar Sahib* complex (popularly called the Golden Temple) at Amritsar. The city of Amritsar, which acquires its name from the lake in which stands the Harmandir the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Sikhs, was founded by Guru Ram Das (Nanak IV 1534-1581CE). The word *Amritsar* is the abbreviation for “*amrit sarowar* ” (the lake of immortality). Work on the lake was started by Guru Ram Das (Nanak IV) and the project was completed by Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V). Guru Arjan Dev then installed the original Granth Sahib (*Adi Granth*) at the Harmandir in the shrine at the centre of the lake, on 30th August 1604. Although there is only one bridge-way leading

¹²⁴ *Puran poor rahio sarab meh. Jal thal ramya ahio* (GGS p 617)

¹²⁵ *Jal ke majjan je gatt howay nit nit maindak naawai...* (GGS P. 484)

¹²⁶ *Tirath hamra har ko naam* (GGS Page 1142)

to Harmandar, the *sanctum sanctorum*, the latter has four doors and this structure has great significance in terms of Sikh ideology¹²⁷.

Harmandar is open to men, women and followers of all religions, all castes, creeds and nationalities. People sit where they find a place and listen to the hymns sung in classical raags (metres) and popular rhythms and beats (*dhunees*) specified in GGS. Harmandar symbolizes the arrival of the new age trans-caste and trans-religion humankind.

Guru Hargobind (Nanak VI, 1595-1644 CE), built the political Centre of the Sikhs called Akal Takhat, an edifice facing the Harmandar in 1609. Thus Darbar Sahib became the theo-political (*miri-piri = temporal and spiritual*) centre of the Sikhs. Ever since, the complex has been attacked and destroyed by Delhi rulers or invading tyrants on many occasions and rebuilt by the Sikhs¹²⁸.

The Sikhs have four other similar historical centres called *Takhats* (thrones) located at Patna in Bihar, Anandpur and Damdama in Punjab and Hazur Sahib in Maharashtra. In addition to these main Centres of Sikhism, there are hundreds of historical Gurdwaras all over India, Bangla Desh and Pakistan. Also, there are some Gurdwaras in the Middle East marking the places where Guru Nanak travelled with his universal message for mankind.

Sikhism places no restrictions on the building of mosques, temples or other places of worship by the people of different faiths. During the Khalsa Raj (1799 to 1849CE), Maharajah Ranjit Singh¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Four doors of Harmandar signify that it is open to all, religions, castes and creeds from all directions. John Archer in his book 'The Sikhs' (page 144 quotes var 14 Pauri 2 of Bhai Gurdas and interprets Harmandar as 'Everybody's temple'. 'Har' in Panjabi means 'everybody' (*Harek*) and 'Mandar' means 'a place of worship. Harmandar= everybody's place of worship

¹²⁸ The most recent attack was by the Indian army in June 1984 on the occasion of the Remembrance Day of Guru Arjan's (Nanak V) martyrdom. Indian journalists and Western media confirmed that hundreds of innocent Sikhs were killed during this invasion of the main Gurdwaras in Punjab.

¹²⁹ "One of his *firman*s (orders) issued to Faqir Noor-ud-Din in the true spirit of Sikhism reads, "Protector of bravery Malwa Singh should be advised to dispense justice in accordance with legitimate right and without the slightest oppression and, furthermore, he should be advised to pass orders in consultation with *panches* and judges of the city in accordance with

frequently made donations to the religious centres of the three main religions of the Raj. Despite his title, he never regarded this people's regime administered in accordance with Khalsa ideals, as his "kingdom".

6.2 Sacred places of Islam

Mecca¹³⁰ and Medina are the sacred places of the Muslims. In Mecca the foundation of the Holy *Kaaba*¹³¹ is believed to have been laid by Adam. He brought the Black Stone (*Hajar-al-Aswad*) from heaven and installed it in Mecca. This stone is 38cm x 28cm and is fixed in a silver casing on the Southeast corner of the *Kaaba* at a height of 1.5 metres from the ground. Hajj pilgrimage and related rituals are known to have been prescribed by angel Jibrael. These require a pilgrim to go around the Holy *Kaaba* and to kiss the Holy stone.¹³² Noah's flood is known to have caused damage to the *Kaaba*, which was repaired by Abraham and his son Ishmael under orders from God. (HQ2: 128).

Non-Muslims are not permitted to visit the *Kaaba*.¹³³ A non-Muslim needs to read the Islamic restrictions placed on non-believers visiting their sacred places in the historical context and empathize with the strong religious sentiments of the believers. The threats to a new enlightened ideology from priestcraft, idol worship, and those with a vested interest in spreading superstition, prejudice and ignorance cannot be ignored. The Prophet's life and mission was always in danger from such people. The Holy Quran says, "O you who believe, the idolaters are unclean, so let them not come near the inviolable place of worship." (HQ 9:28) Non-Muslims are not allowed to construct any temples to God in Arabia. Non-believers

the Shashtras and the Quran, as pertinent to the faith of the parties for Such is our pleasure." (*Firman* dated 31 Bhadon Sambat 1882. The original is now with Faqir's family in Pakistan)

¹³⁰ Its previous name was Becca. It is 70 miles from the port of Jeddah and is locally known as *Umm-al-Qura* (Mother of the towns).

¹³¹ According to Israr-e-Shayat the Holy Kaaba could fly in the air. *Kaaba* literally means "A high place". It is considered the right hand of Allah (Ahadis Ahmed, Trimidhi and Ibn Hibban)

¹³² Umar said, "No doubt I know that you are a stone and can neither benefit anyone nor harm anyone. Had I not seen Allah's Apostle kissing you, I would not have kissed you" (SB667,675,676,680 V.2 B.26)

¹³³ This restriction contrasts with "We have created *Kaaba* for the benefit of all people" (See selected verses of the Holy Quran in Gurmukhi page 37)

cannot expect favourable treatment in Ramzan because the Holy Quran says, “Then when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor due, then leave their way free.”(HQ 9:5).

Again these injunctions need to be noted in the historical context and in the context of threats to an enlightened ideology from diverse cult practices spreading superstition and idol worship.

6.3 Sikh places of worship

A Gurdwara is the Sikh place of congregational worship. The word *Gurudwara* or *Gurdwara* may be interpreted as “through the Guru” or, “the door to the Guru”. A Gurdwara for the Sikhs is much more than a place of worship. It is also a meeting place and an educational centre for the Sikh community where the twin institutions of *Sangat* (holy congregation) and *Langar* (the Guru’s kitchen) are located. A Gurdwara is divided into two main areas or halls: a hall for worshipping in which Guru Granth Sahib is placed in a central position; the *Langar* area where vegetarian food is prepared and served to people in rows (i.e. in *pangat*) as equals. In both places people usually sit on the floor in the cross-leg (*chaunkra*) position. There is always relaxation of this rule for those who are physically unable to sit in the dining hall in that position.

There is no social, religious or gender discrimination of any sort in a Sikh Gurdwara and the *Sangat/pangat*¹³⁴ tradition continues to ensure this. A person attending worship may sit on the floor anywhere he or she likes, although, in most Gurdwaras, men and women sit in separate groups. At Harmandar Sahib and at many other larger historical Gurdwaras they sit wherever they can find a place. In India and Pakistan, many Hindus and Muslims attend Sikh Gurdwaras and there are, and have been, many famous Muslim and

¹³⁴*Sangat* is the holy congregation (open to all) and *pangat* is the indiscriminate seating arrangement in rows in the community dining area - the *Langar*.

Hindu *raagis* (classical singers of hymns from GGS). A Muslim, Bhai Chaand, was a well-known *ragi* at Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple). Bhai Lal is a Muslim *raagi* at Nankana Sahib and has visited UK on at least two occasions to perform Sikh devotional music in the British Gurdwaras.

Sikh worship consists of *kirtan* (the singing of hymns from GGS), *paath* (reading of GGS) and *katha* (interpretation of Gurbani and associated literature with reference to historical anecdotes by learned Sikhs called *gianis*). As Sikhism does not recognise ordained priesthood, any educated Sikh, man or woman, can do *kirtan*, *paath* or *katha* and perform the ceremonies relating to the rites of passage: birth, death, marriage (*anand karaj*) or any other event and say the Sikh *ardaas* (congregational prayer).

6.3.1 Muslim places of worship

Mosque (*Masjid*): - A Masjid must have two things (1) minarets for doing the call for prayer (*Azan*) and (2) *Qibla*- a niche in the mosque built in such a way that the devotee's face remains towards the Mecca at the time of the prayer.

Call to prayer (*Azan*): - five times a day, the *Mullah* (Muslim priest) must go up into the Minaret and shout the *Azan* as loudly as he can (Women are not allowed to perform *Azan*). It has five parts:

Allah hu Akbar (repeated four times): - God is great.

Shuhidan la illa ill Allah: (repeated twice): - I vouchsafe that there is but one God and no other God.

Wa Shuhidan Muhammad Rasul Allah (repeated twice): - And I witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

Hayee Ali Al salwat (repeated twice): - Come for the prayer.

Hayee Ali Al Fallah (repeated twice): - Come for the meritorious act.

Allah Akbar. Allah Akbar. La illa ill Allah: - (God is great. God is great. There is nothing but God)

Prayer on *Lailat-al-Qadar* (the Night of Power), "is better than a thousand months."¹³⁵ The angels and the spirit descend therein by the

¹³⁵ "Whosoever establishes the prayers on the night of Qadar out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not to show off) then all his past sins will be forgiven"(SB 34-36 Vol.1 Book 2)

permission of the Lord”(HQ 97:3-4). It occurs during the last 10 days of the month of Ramadan.

At the time of prayer Muslims must face the Mecca. “ And whencesoever thou cometh (for prayer O Muhammad) turn thy face toward the inviolable place of worship.”(HQ2-150)

If a person hears the *Azan* and utters, “I am satisfied with Allah as my Lord, with Muhammad as Messenger and with Islam as *deen* (the faith), his sins would be forgiven” (SM 749). “O ye who believe! When the call is heard for the prayer of the day of congregation, haste unto remembrance of Allah and leave your trading” (HQ62: 9) Women usually pray at home and do not lead the prayers.

Unlike the *Langar* in a Sikh Gurdwara, there is no community kitchen adjoining mosques.

6.4 Pilgrimage in Sikhism

Pilgrimage, as a journey to a religious place is a common practice in human societies. While Muslims and the Sikhs do visit their religious and historical shrines, it is important to note the differences in motivation and purpose by each faith group.

Pilgrimage, as a meritorious act has no place in Sikhism¹³⁶. However, the practice of visiting historical places of Sikhism has grown for religious, cultural, tourism and educational reasons. Such places remind Sikhs (especially children) of the tradition and values for which great sacrifices have been made. These are also places where one is likely to meet other *Gursikhs* well-versed in *Gurbani* teachings. Although there is no religious requirement for the Sikhs to go on a “pilgrimage” many Sikhs visit historical places as points of interest and heritage. The Guru has emphasized that without divine contemplation and purification of the mind pilgrimage is a useless ritual.

¹³⁶ “Introduction to Sikhism” by Gobind Singh Mansukhani p 60. Hemkunt Press 1985.

“I do not go on *Hajj* to *Kaaba* (Mecca) nor worship at Hindu holy places. I serve only One Omnipresent God and none other.” (GGS p. 1136)¹³⁷

“Why bathe at the place of pilgrimage when God’s Name is the real place of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage is acquisition of inner (divine) knowledge through contemplation of the Name” (GGS P.687)¹³⁸

The background of Guru Amar Das (before he became the Guru) is enlightening in this respect. He went on many pilgrimages but saw the True Light only when he met the True Guru, Guru Angad Dev.

“The Guru is the river (pilgrim spot) in whose water (divine instruction), the filth of sin and evil thoughts is washed off”. (GGS p. 1329)¹³⁹

Guru Gobind Singh further stressed that without devotion and purity of mind pilgrimages were meaningless.

6.4.1 Pilgrimage in Islam

Pilgrimage (*Hajj*): - According to Islam whosoever enters Mecca (house of God) is safe and “Pilgrimage to the house is a duty unto Allah for mankind”(HQ3: 97).¹⁴⁰ Muslims must visit and pay homage to *Hajar-al-Aswad* (also known as *Sang-e-Aswad*) at Mecca once in life between 8th and 13th *Dhu-al-Hajj*, the twelfth month of Islam. A slave has to perform pilgrimage twice. Once before he /she is free and once after liberation. All Muslims repeat the following words in unison at Mecca

“*Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik*” (Here I am at your service O Lord God”)

¹³⁷ *Hajj Kabey jao na tirath pooja. Eko sewi avar na dooja.* (GGS1136)

¹³⁸ *Tirath navan jao tirath nam hai Tirath sabad bichar antar gian hai* (GGS 687)

¹³⁹ *Gur dariao sada jal nirmal milia durmat mael hare* (GGS 1329)

¹⁴⁰ “Perform the pilgrimage and visit (to Mecca) for Allah. And if ye are prevented, then send such gifts as can be obtained with ease, and shave not your heads until the gifts have reached the destination.....and whoever cannot find (such gifts), then a fast of three days while on the pilgrimage, and of seven when ye have returned”(HQ 2:196)

Hajj involves - Putting on *Ihram* (Two sheets of unsewn white cloth) at *Miqat*. 2. Circumambulating (*Tawaf*) the holy *Kaaba*¹⁴¹ (Muslim shrine at Mecca also known as *Baitullah*) seven times (SM 2982), three times at fast pace and four times at slow pace. They kiss *Hajar-al-Aswad*¹⁴² (the black stone) at each round 3. A fast walk between *As-Safa* and *Al-Marwah*.¹⁴³ Allah does not acknowledge the *Hajj* if the pilgrim does not observe *Sa'i* -running seven times between *As-Safa* and *al-Marwa* (SM 2923). 4. Visiting and staying at *Mina*, *Arafah* and *Muzdalifah* 5. Throwing seven stones each at three concrete pillars (*Ramyur-rijam*) at *Mina* to drive away the Satan (*Jamrat-al-aqaba*) 6. Shaving or trimming hair after performing *Hajj*. 7. To slaughter an animal as sacrifice to God (usually a cow, a goat, a sheep or a camel is sacrificed) on the 10th day (known as *Nahar*) of the month¹⁴⁴.

8. A visit to Prophet Mohammed's tomb at Medina.

While doing a *Hajj*, Muslims are forbidden from wearing "a shirt, or a turban, a trouser, or a cap" (SM 2647). "The socks should be cut short to make the ankles bare" (SB 615 Vol.2). They do not shave or pare their nails. The *Hajj* lasts for 4 days plus three days of rest at Mecca. Then the pilgrims go to Medina and visit the Prophet's tomb.¹⁴⁵

Those who have performed all these rituals call themselves *Hajjis*. Most devout *Hajjis* bring home water from the well at *ZamZam* for

¹⁴¹ *Kaaba* is a 33x39x49 feet cube-like one- storey building which is supposed to have been originally built by Adam and later repaired and looked after by Abraham and his son Ismael.

¹⁴² According to Abbas Muhammad the stone was white when it came from heaven. It turned black as the humans kept touching it. When God sits in judgement on the dooms day, this stone will develop two eyes and a tongue. The eyes will recognise those who performed *Hajj* and the tongue will remonstrate on behalf of the devout Muslims.

¹⁴³ Two hills near Mecca. They are known as symbols of Allah" (SB 706 V.2 B.26)

¹⁴⁴ The origin of sacrifice is the story of Abraham who was told in a dream to sacrifice his son for God (HQ37:102-106) "For every nation we appointed a ritual that they may mention the name of Allah over the beast that He hath given them for food (HQ 22:34). The Prophet once sacrificed a cow on behalf of his beloved wife Aisha (SM3030 SB 767 V2 B30). On his farewell pilgrimage the Prophet sacrificed 100 camels, 63 of them with his own hands (SM 2803 SB 770). Sacrifice of animals was prevalent at that time even among the Jews although Jehovah, the God of the Jews and Christians had declared that He "desired mercy and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6)

¹⁴⁵ Wahabi Muslims do not consider it Islamic to worship at a grave and therefore do not visit Medina.

use at home. This water is considered sacred.¹⁴⁶

6.5 Sacrifice: Sikhism and Islam

The significance of sacrifice as a religious concept, symbolic of detachment from this life and its false materialist attractions on the one hand and total devotion to the Deity on the other, needs to be clearly understood. Great sacrifices have been made for the right causes or for those near and dear: for children by parents; by lovers for each other; for kings and countries, for upholding human rights, for justice and so on. Animal sacrifice, as a substitute for self sacrifice (i.e. accepting death or taking pain on self) or sacrifice of something/someone near and dear to please a Deity, is a long standing religious practice. Wasteful ascetic austerities to gain spiritual powers may be looked at as an aspect of the same sacrificial human trait. A devotee may be prepared to sacrifice anything in this life to gain some spiritual benefit or to please the Deity.

Under the heading of “Pilgrimage” above sacrifice of animals is mentioned as an Islamic practice. Such a practice may seem abhorrent to the modern animal loving mind; yet, it needs to be seen in the light of what has been said above. It is the purity of mind and devotion to the One and only Allah, which the Islamic ritual of animal sacrifice tries to induce in a true Muslim devotee. That may also be the reason why an animal reared at home is regarded as even a worthier candidate for ritual sacrifice. Animal sacrifice is mentioned at many places in the Holy Quran. (HQ2: 173, 6: 119).

All adult Muslims are supposed to sacrifice an animal on *Id-al-Adha* (SM 4818-4835) because “There is a reward annexed to every hair of the animal sacrifice” (Trimidhi V.1-1392).¹⁴⁷ “We have given thee abundance, so pray unto the Lord and sacrifice” (HQ 108:42)

¹⁴⁶ According to *Tabaqat* (Vol. 2 page 241-44) the water of this well is sacred because the Prophet spat into it.

¹⁴⁷ “On the day of judgement the horns, hair and hoofs of the sacrificed animal fall in the pan of pious deeds and thus cancel out the misdeeds of the devotees”(Mishkwat –al- Masabih Book 4 .Chapter 49-2)

According to Sikhism animal sacrifice has no spiritual merit and is strictly forbidden.

“The use of force is tyranny even if you call it *halal*. When your account is called for in the court of the Lord, what will your predicament be then?” (GGS Page 1374)¹⁴⁸

Sikhism believes in sacrifice for a noble cause or for the good of humanity when necessary. Guru Gobind Singh, at Chamkaur, dressed and sent his own two sons to the battle in a spirit of sacrifice for the right cause. Service with humility (*sewa*), sharing one's food and earnings with the needy, treading the righteous path regardless of cost, and inner detachment while living a full life, is the Guru's way of sacrifice. Sikhism preaches that a real sacrifice is to lay down one's own life for a noble cause.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ *Kabir jori keeyay jullam hai, kehta nau halal.....* (GGS p.1374)

In Islam meat is prepared in a special way (*zibah*). The animal is killed by puncturing the jugular vein of the throat while at the same time *Sura-al-Fatihah* is recited. The belief is that the slaughtered animal's "blood reaches the acceptance of God before it falls on the ground (Trimidhi Vol.1 –1392)" This is called *halal* (rightful). Meat prepared in any other way is known as *haram* (forbidden). The person who performs *Zibah* must be a Muslim. Pig-meat (*Khanzir*) and a donkey's meat are forbidden (SB 383). Sikhism forbids this type of killing and Guru Gobind Singh issued special instructions not to eat meat prepared in the Muslim way. "*Jia badho so dharam kar thapo dharam kaho kat bhai....*" Further interpretation of this injunction would forbid a Sikh to support ritual killing of any type i.e. Hindu sacrifices.

¹⁴⁹ *Maran munsa surian haq hai je hoe marey parwanu* (GGS p. 579).

CHAPTER 7

God's Messengers and their Second Coming

7.1 Guru in Sikhism

The reverential status and concept of the “Guru” in Sikhism is unique amongst world religions. The Sikh Gurus did not ask their followers to remember them with the name of God.

The Sikh Gurus did not claim that after them no one would be qualified to preach religion. They simply said that they were like other human beings and were slaves of God.

In Sikhism, the “Guru”, a comprehensive Sikh concept, may be regarded as the messenger of Truth. First and foremost, like Islam, the Sikhs believe in One and only One God and none other. They follow the ten human Gurus and their instructions as enshrined in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib (the book representing the Word or *Gurbani* of the Gurus). The human Guru is the Enlightener who shows the path to union with the Ultimate Truth (God). He is not identified with any one person but rather with the light of the Word Guru i.e. *Gurbani*:

“There is only One *Gurbani*, One Guru, and one contemplation of the Word.” (GGS P.646)¹⁵⁰

The path, the light that shows it and the Ultimate Truth at the end of that path, represent a single integrated idea in Sikhism. The concept of a messenger from God (human or supernatural) as distinct from the message is not relevant in Sikhism.

¹⁵⁰ *ika Bani ik Gur Iko shabad vichaar.* (GGS p. 646)

The Sikh Gurus repeatedly made it clear throughout the Sikh scriptures that they were no more than humble servants of God. “Nanak *daas*” (Nanak, the servant) is one of the most repeated expressions in the GGS.

The Sikh Guru went further and gave his true disciple the same status as himself: “He who lives according to the spiritual and physical Sikh discipline of *rehat* is my true disciple. Nay he is my master and I his servant.” (Guru Gobind Singh)¹⁵¹

There is a unique relationship between a religious teacher and his follower. A Sikh has a direct link with God through continuous research of *Shabad* or *Gurbani* (Guru’s Word). The Sikhs consider the Guru, as an intermediary between humankind and the Creator. He is not looked upon as a representative of God who promises automatic salvation to his followers. The Guru is the Light, which shows the path to enlightenment. One who keeps his eyes closed and makes no effort to see or follow the path shown by *Gurbani* cannot depend on anyone for union with God.

“According to Sikh faith, everyone possesses the potentiality of perfection and is capable of attaining union with God directly, and when the disciple reaches that stage, the Guru hails him as his master.” (*A Critique of Sikhism* p.7, S. Gurmit Singh, advocate.).

This concept contrasts with the Islamic position (*ibid*) and with the position of Jesus Christ in Christianity and that of Lord Krishna in Hinduism respectively as follows:

“I am the way; I am the truth and I am life; no one comes to the Father except by me.” (Jesus - John 14, 6)

“Those who take refuge in Me alone will cross the sea of life”, Says Lord Krishna in the Holy Gita (VII - XIV)

The Sikh Gurus made no such claims. Since every soul has the potential for making a direct connection with the ultimate Reality, the need for a belief in any special beings such as a prophet or an

¹⁵¹ *Rehni rahe soi sikh mera oh Sahib main uska chera* (Guru Gobind Singh)

angel as a pre-requisite for seeking deliverance and union with God becomes irrelevant. They may act as guides but can do no more. The concept of *Khalsa*¹⁵² as “*Waheguru’s Khalsa*” also derives from this direct link between a Sikh and God.

In Sikhism, names of Hindu mythical gods and Muslim angels are mentioned in the context of the relevant popular stories only to draw moral lessons. For example, talking about the grace of God Kabir says:

“When He bestowed His grace on the venerable Adam, only then was the later entitled to live in paradise for a long time”¹⁵³ (GGS p. 1161)

About those who meditate on God and live a moral life Guru Arjan Dev writes:

“The accounts kept by *Chitr* and *Gupt*, the recording scribes, are torn up and the angels of death feel helpless” (GSS Page 79)¹⁵⁴

Otherwise, in the context of Sikh teachings, the Sikhs are strongly warned against putting their faith in any thing or being other than God and *Gurbani*.

7.2 Nabi or Rasul in Islam

A Nabi’s revelation is called *Wahi*. A Rasul not only brings *Wahi* but also brings a message from God. Muslims believe that Adam¹⁵⁵ was the first Nabi and according to the *Ahadis*, God has sent 224,000 Nabis¹⁵⁶ and 315 Rasuls to the earth so far. The Holy Quran names 25 of them (HQ 6: 84-86). Six of them are:

¹⁵²Literally means, “sovereign’s own land”. In Sikhism it means both, the “pure” from its Arabic derivation, and Sikhs linked directly with the One God, the Enlightener. In the orders (*Hukamnamas*) issued by the Gurus e.g. the Sixth Guru, Guru Har Gobind, the word *Khalsa* for the Sikhs was used in the latter proprietary sense.

¹⁵³ *Baba Adam ko kichh nadar dikhaee, Un bhi bhist Ghaneri paaee* (GGS Page 1161).

¹⁵⁴ *Chitr Gupt ka kagad Pharia jamdootan kachhu na chali* (GSS p. 79)

¹⁵⁵ In Christianity and Islam Adam is believed to be the first person created by God. Adam and his wife Eve (Created from Adam’s ribs) lived in the Garden of Eden. They ate a forbidden fruit. As punishment God expelled them from the garden.

¹⁵⁶ (He is) the knower of the unseen, and He revealeth unto none His secret save unto the

Adam (*Safi-Allah* = favourite of God)
 Noah (*Nabi-Allah* = Prophet of God)
 Moses (*Kalim-Allah* = Spokesman of God)
 Abraham (*Khalil-Allah* = Friend of Allah)
 Jesus (*Kalimat-Allah* = voice of God)
 Mohammed (*Sali-Allah-alia-wassalum* = Prophet and Messenger of God)

They were supreme in their times. Mohammed was the last *Nabi* and Messenger¹⁵⁷ (*Khatum-un-Nabiyeen* - *Sura-al-Ahazab* 4).

“I have been given superiority over the other Prophets in six respects. I have been given words, which are concise and comprehensive in meaning. I have been helped by divine terror that has been struck in the hearts of my enemies; spoils have been made lawful to me..... I have been sent to all mankind and the line of Prophets is closed with me” Said the Prophet. (SM 1062)

In Islam, it is not sufficient to believe in God. Love and prayer for the Prophet are a pre-condition.

“None of you is a believer till I am dearer to you than your child, your father, and the whole mankind”(SM 33). “He who blesses me once, Allah would bless him ten times.”(SM 808). “He who obeys me, obeys Allah, and he who disobeys me, disobeys Allah” (SB 204 V.4 B.52)

“You must say *Drood* for the Prophet”(HQ 48:9).¹⁵⁸ “Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask

Messenger who He hath chosen and then maketh a guard to go before him and a guard behind him” (HQ 72:26-27)

¹⁵⁵ According to the Holy Quran every nation has a messenger (see HQ 16:36, 14:5 and 37: 64 We have sent a messenger to every nation). Ahmedias do not recognise Prophet Muhammad as the last Prophet and quote this verse. They believe that messengers will come after Muhammad but they will be born only in Muslim families and will only preach Islam. Ahmedias owe their origin to Mirza Ghulam Ahmed (1803-1908CE) of Qadian. After his death, the second Caliph Hakim Nur-Ud-Din developed differences with Ghulam Ahmed's son Bashir Ahmed. This caused schism in Ahmedia ranks and split it into two sects, One at Qadian (Known as Mirzai) and the other at Lahore (known as Ahmedia Anjuman). In Pakistan all Ahmedias are declared *Kafir* (Non-believer) because they do not believe in the finality of Prophethood after Muhammad.

¹⁵⁸ Prayers said for the Prophet are called *Drood* and feast and prayer performed for the

blessings on Him and salute him with a worthy salutation.”(HQ 33:56). “Who so obeyeth Allah and His Messenger, He will make him enter gardens underneath which rivers flow, where each will dwell forever”(HQ4: 13) “ There in rivers of water unpolluted, and rivers of milk whereof the flavour changeth not, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers and rivers of clear-run honey” (HQ47: 15).

7.3 Angels in Sikhism

The Sikhs do not believe in the existence of angels. According to Sikhism “Those who live a virtuous life are angels but those who commit sins are devils”¹⁵⁹

7.3.1 Angels in Islam

Malaika: Muslims believe that there are angels (*Malaika*) who work for God (HQ 69:17).¹⁶⁰ They are neither male nor female and they do not eat or drink. Some of them live in the sky others live on earth. Four of them are archangels. Angel Jibrael brought messages from God to the Holy Prophet. Angel Michael provides sustenance. Angel Izrael is the angel of death. Angel Asrafil will appear on the dooms-day. Angel Malik is the gatekeeper of hell. Angels do not commit sins but *Iblees (Satan)*¹⁶¹ refused to bow to Adam (HQ20: 116) and was expelled out of Heaven (HQ15: 30-32). Munker and Nakir¹⁶² are frightening black angels who question the dead in their graves.

Prophet's daughter Bibi Fatima is called *Qaduri*. The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! How shall we (ask Allah to) send blessings on you?" Allah's Apostle replied, "Say: O Allah send your Mercy on Muhammad and his wives and on his offspring"(SB 588- 589)

¹⁵⁹ “*Sadh karam jo purkh kamaway naam devta jagat kahaway.....*” (Guru Gobind Singh)

¹⁶⁰ Some Muslims believe that there are 125,000 angels but others put the number at 80,000. Munker and

Nakir are called *Karamin Katbeen*. 8 Angels carry God's throne, 19 under Malik look after Hell. Heaven is under Rizwan. Angels guarded Prophet Muhammad. "For him are angels ranged before him and behind him by Allah's command" (HQ 13:11)

¹⁶¹ According to the Holy Quran Satan was created from fire but Adam was made from earth. When God told Satan to bow to Adam he refused saying that he was superior to Adam. God expelled him from heaven. Satan took a vow to misinform Adam's progeny (HQ 7:11-25)

¹⁶² Like the Hindu gods 'Chitra' and 'Gupt' (See Skandh Puran and Garur Puran) Munker and Nakir record people's good or bad deeds. In some Hindu religious books 'Chitergupt' is mentioned as one person.

God communicates either direct with His *Rasuls* as he did with Hazrat Musa or through his angel as he did with Muhammad¹⁶³.

7.4 No Second Coming of the Guru

Guru Granth Sahib is the *aad/jugaad* (eternal) Guru of the Sikhs. *Aad* means “at the beginning” and *jugaad* means “over the ages”. Representation of Guruship in human form was finally and firmly terminated by Guru Gobind Singh who carried the torch of Guru Nanak in the tenth human form. Therefore, the Sikhs do not believe in the return of a human Guru personality. On the other hand, through the linked concept of Guru Granth Sahib and *Guru Khalsa Panth* (“*aape gur chella*” i.e. Himself the Guru and the disciple), the Sikh Guru lives on through Guru Granth Sahib. However, no **one** person amongst the Sikhs can ever claim sole Guruship. That is the traditional and central Sikh *Panthic* belief. There are always fringe sects who prefer their own interpretations of the scriptures. In this category, “Sikh” gurudoms flourish feeding on the prosperity of the more gullible followers.

Some ill informed Sikhs are sometimes heard saying that the Guru would be reborn as *Nihklank Avtar*. They sing ‘*Bhal Bhag Bhia Ghar Sambhal ke Har joo Harmandar Awenge*’ (The family of Sambhal will be blessed when the Guru is born in their family and pays a visit to Harmandar). These lines are nowhere to be found in Sikh scriptures. The story appears to have been borrowed from Hinduism where according to Vishnu Puran *Nihklank* or *Kalki* will appear in village Sambhal (District Muradabad) in the family of Vishnuyash Brahman. He will ride a white horse and destroy the evildoers. To counteract this misbelief the Bhats wrote about Guru Ram Das (fourth Guru):

“ The True Guru, The True Guru is our only Lord. He disarms the powerful, smothers the mighty, fulfills the devotees and is Krishna and Kalki in one” (GGS Page 1403)¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ In the case of Prophet Muhammad he spoke through Jibrael.

¹⁶⁴ *Satguru Satguru Satguru Gobind jeo* (GGS p. 1403)

7.4.1 Second Coming of a Prophet

The Muslims believe that according to an indication given in *Ahadis*, Mehdi will come into this world and rule until the false Messiah (Al Masih al Dajjal)¹⁶⁵ appears who will spread oppression and corruption. Muslims will flee to Jabal Al Dukhan in Syria and Dajjal will besiege them. Then Jesus will descend on a minaret in the East of Damascus wearing two white garments dyed in saffron¹⁶⁶. He will bring justice from heaven and kill Dajjal at the gate of Ludd¹⁶⁷. Then will appear Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) who will hasten out from every mound (HQ21: 96). They will spread corruption and oppose Jesus.¹⁶⁸ There will be 10 signs. Some of which will be: the rising of the sun from the west, the emergence of a beast from the earth, wind taking away the souls of the believers, Quran will be taken up to heaven. A fire will spread everywhere, and there will be three landslides in the East, one in the west and one in Arabia. A slave girl will give birth to her own master. According to Ibn Maajah (Kitab-al-Fitan Hadis 3088) a clan of people will rise in the East who will pave the way for the coming of Mehdi.

Prophet Muhammad was not sure when Dajjal was to appear. He is reported to have said, “If he appears while I am still among you, I will contend with him on behalf of every Muslim. But if he appears after I am gone, then every person must contend with him on his own behalf ” (The signs before the day of Judgement by Ibn Kathir p. 18)

“The Mehdi will be one of my descendants, with my name and parentage. He will have a high forehead and a hooked nose and

¹⁶⁵ Some Scholars (i.e. Ahmad Musnad 2-457) believe that thirty Dajjals will appear each claiming to be a Messenger of Allah. Some Muslims believe that Ibn Sayyad was Dajjal. Dajjal will have the words “*Kafir*” written between his eyes (SB626 V.2 B.26), will be blind of right eye (SB 554) and his other eye will be like a floating grape. He will not enter Mecca and Medina (See Kitab-al-Fitan by Muslim 8/194-95 Bukhari’s Kitab-al-Ambia 4/163) because Medina will be guarded by angels. Ahmed Trimidhi in Abwab-al-Fitan Hadis 2350 and 6/522-23 writes that Dajjal’s parents will remain childless for thirty years before Dajjal is born.

¹⁶⁶ Jesus would be a Muslim and will fight for Islam. He will judge Christians, break crosses, kill swine and abolish Jazia. (SB 656 page 287)

¹⁶⁷ Scholars believe that this place is in Israel where the present Airport now exists.

¹⁶⁸ ‘The signs before the day of Judgement’ by Ibn Kathir p. 18.

will rule for seven years.” Said Prophet Muhammad. (Abu Dawd Kitab-al-Mehdi and Al- Trimidhi.)

CHAPTER 8

The Nature of Evil and Sin

All religious ideologies attempt to define what is good and what is evil. In most religions God represents all that is good and an anti-God entity called devil, *Satan, shaitan or Iblis* etc. represents the evil influence on men and women. Satan's main weapon is temptation to lure human beings away from the righteous path. As God's work is done by angels, so Satan's work is also done by evil spirits or otherworldly beings called Jinns. As discussed below, the Sikh religious thought based on One Indivisible God and His creation, does not subscribe to the concept of His rival i.e. an anti-God entity. "No one is His rival." (GGS p. 592)¹⁶⁹

Similarly, the nature of sin needs to be understood. Simply not adhering to a religious code of conduct may result in a religious "sin". For example, to live with a woman without marrying her in accordance with religious rites, would be regarded as "living in sin". Generally, to sin is either not to conform to, or to break a religious or a moral law. It may be in the nature of an act or omission regarded as socially shameful or grievous. As religion mainly concerns inner (mental and spiritual) discipline and progress, therefore, even some thoughts may be regarded as sinful. Many religious sins may or may not also be crimes punishable by secular law.

It is clear that there are shades of "sin": from breach of some religious code to the most heinous crimes. Therefore, although we all think we know what "sin" means, it will always remain rather a subjective concept.

¹⁶⁹*Tis ka sarik ko nahi* (GGS 592)

The dictionary definition of sin from a theological aspect is “A condition of estrangement from God resulting from a transgression of His known will”¹⁷⁰. This would be a good starting point for both, Sikhism and Islam. In a very broad religious sense, “evil”, discussed earlier would give rise to “wrong doing” or “sin”.

There are many similarities between Islam and Sikhism regarding many “social” sins. For example repentance and forgiveness are regarded as inseparable in Sikhism. Islam also says, “But who repenteth after his wrong doing and amendeth, lo! Allah will relent toward him. (HQ 5:39 and 7: 153)

There are also some fundamental differences as to what sin is.

8.1 Evil in Sikhism

This is an important area in which Sikh religious thought Parts Company with many traditional religious views, regarding the nature of evil. Sikhism does not accept the existence of any anti-God entity. The concept of the singularity and unity of God and two essential characteristics of God - “devoid of enmity and devoid of fear”¹⁷¹ - confirm that everything is within His will. Traditional religion often defines human conduct e.g. equality, tolerance, human rights, charity and welfare, as human values opposite to what it defines or sees as evil. God created everything and everything created is within His will. No being or thing or influence operates outside God’s will. Yet, like other religions, Sikhism continually warns against the negative influence of certain human weaknesses if they are not controlled. These influences affect human behaviour, and, if allowed to prevail, may be equated to evil or sinful behaviour. That is the closest Sikhism goes to the concept of evil *per se* as an anti-God influence. It may be said that Sikhism does not see “evil” or “sin” in the same light as seen by most other religions.

In Sikhism, “evil” results from the imbalance between worldly and spiritual pursuits. Worldly ambition, pleasures and desires are not necessarily “evils” in themselves provided they are moderated by the need to pursue the spiritual goal of union with the Divine. A

¹⁷⁰*Parnesar te bhulian viapan sabhe rog* (GGS 135)

¹⁷¹*Mool Mantar*, the basic precept of Guru Nanak (GGS p 1)

state of equipoise cannot be achieved unless there is moderation in worldly attachment and desires and these are balanced by love, contentment, truth, humility and a virtuous life of truthful conduct which brings the human soul closer to God (GGS p. 955).

Gurmatt (Guru's teaching) warns the individual against certain negative influences. Examples often quoted are the influences of uncontrolled sexual desire, anger, greed, attachment and ego or vanity. However, it is also accepted that all these emotions or life forces, when controlled, do have a constructive need in life. The only way to harness them is to meditate on, research (*khoj*) and praise the Supreme Presence in all creation. This is meditation on His Name or *Naam simran*. The "web" of *maya* (illusion) is the distracting influence of the changing world (*sansaar*) perceived by the senses. Such influence is false (*mithia*) if it distracts from the real purpose of life, which is to seek harmony with the Absolute, the Unchanging, and the Timeless. Materialism alone (material ambition, pursuits, attachment and over indulgence) manifesting itself in self-centered activities and pride (arrogance or *haumai*) and prejudice, becomes the force working against God's will (*Hukam*) in the human mind.

In Sikhism therefore, anti-God behaviour is all behaviour that breaks the link between man and God, for the sole purpose of human life is to establish that link (mostly through congregational worship or *Sangat*). Over indulgence of any sort is "evil" in the Sikh sense and moderate indulgence to sustain a healthy life (so that the main purpose of life may be pursued) is Godliness. Such behaviour, which makes one forget God must be shunned together with the company of those who indulge in such behaviour.

No person is evil forever. "Evil" relates only to certain types of behaviour, which can be sublimated through the Guru's instruction. That is the Sikh way. A Sikh will confront evil doers as a last resort, but the Sikh attitude towards evil needs to be understood. A fallen person in battle, for example is not an enemy. Only conduct can be good or evil i.e. the behaviour and not the person is judged. It is only with the right attitude (free from enmity or prejudice and free from fear) that the framework for the human society for an evolutionary

progress towards the realm of God, the Ultimate Plane of Truth (*Sach Khand*) can be provided.

The Sikh concept of a *Khalsa* society - a social order of those directly linked with God and who fear none, see no evil and have ill will towards none - is the Sikh ideal of a Godly society.

For the reasons discussed above, superstition and fear have no place in Sikhism. As nothing is outside God's creation and His will, so the only "reverential fear" (*bhao*) is the awe-inspiring love (*bhaao*) for the Lord, which a Sikh carries in his heart.

8.2 Evil in Islam

Evil is personified in Islam as *Satan or Shaitan*. According to Islam "No child is born unless touched by the *Shaitan* at birth. That is why the child cries." (SB 71 V.6 B.60, SM 15-page 120). "If a whisper from the Devil reach thee (O Muhammad) then seek refuge in Allah" (HQ 41:36).

There is a *shaitan* attached to every non-believer (*Qarin*). The Holy Quran says: -"We assign unto him a devil who would be his mate" (HQ 43: 36 and 41:25)

A man said to Prophet Muhammad, "*Shaitan* comes between me and my prayer and my recitation and makes it confused for me". The Prophet said, "This *Shaitan* is called *Khinziv*. When you see him, then seek refuge in Allah and spit to your left three times." (Sahih Muslim)

Once in his prayers the Prophet stood up and repeated three times "I take refuge in Allah, I curse thee with Allah's curse". Then he stretched out his hand as if he caught hold of something. When his companions asked him to explain this strange behaviour the Prophet said, "Allah's enemy *Iblis* (Satan) came with a flame of fire to burn my face, therefore I tried to seize him. I swear by Allah that had it not been for the mediation of my brother Suleman, *Iblis* would have been bound and made object of sport for the children of Medina." (SM 1106, SB 332 V.6 B.60)

“When you hear the cock crowing then ask Allah for his bounty for it has seen an angel. When you hear the braying of a donkey, then seek refuge in Allah from *Shaitan* for it has seen *Shaitan*”. (SB 522 V.4B.54)

“When the Satan hears the call to prayer (*Azan*) he runs away to a distance equal to that of Rauha from Medina ”¹⁷²(SM751). “*Shaitan* goes to the sky and eavesdrops on God”. (Sura Hujar rakuh 2) The Prophet ordered the killing of dogs (SM 310-11). “It is your duty to kill the jet-black dog having two spots on the eyes, for it is the devil”. (SM 3813)

When Ramadan comes, the gates of the Garden (of heaven) are opened and the gates of the fire of hell are closed and the Shaitan is fettered. (SB122, 123,V.3 B.31). Jinns and the shaitan obey charms and talismans.

8.3 Sin in Sikhism

Sin is called *paap* in Panjabi. Sikh teachings are more cautious about branding an action or breach of a code as a “sin”. For example, betrayal of trust is a sin (*paap*) but not removal of hair, which, otherwise, is the most serious breach of Sikh discipline, called *rehat*.

The starting position of Sikh teachings regarding sin is that only the Lord is perfect. “All are apt to make mistakes, only God (the Creator), is infallible.” (GGS p. 61)¹⁷³

“All things created are susceptible to error, only the Creator errs not.” (GGS p. 1344)¹⁷⁴ “O brother, no one errs knowingly. God alone is behind all human errors and enlightenment.” (GGS p. 1344)¹⁷⁵

This is not to say that there is no human will, but that the human will also is his gift and ultimately within His Will. A Sikh cannot take

¹⁷² Rauha is 36 miles away from Medina.

¹⁷³ *Bhulan undar sabh ko abhul Guru Kartar.* (GGS 61)

¹⁷⁴ *Bhulan wich kia sabh koi, Karta aap na bhule.* (GGS 1344)

¹⁷⁵ *Koi jaan na bhule bhai. So bhule jis aap bhulai bujhe jisai bhujaee.* (GGS 1344)

any comfort from the above *Gurbani* quotation, which is addressed to those who judge others. A “sinner” is like a sick person who can make the effort to get better by taking the right medicine, but, nevertheless, deserves some understanding while suffering from illness.

There is no sin or crime, no matter how heinous, which is not forgivable following repentance. This Sikh religious sentiment is expressed in many ways throughout Sikh teachings, and the Sikh history is full of moving acts of forgiveness by the Gurus and the Khalsa Panth. Even the worst enemies of the Sikhs grudgingly accepted that the Guru (and the Guru’s living image Khalsa Panth) does forgive any sin or crime following sincere repentance: In this respect two sayings have been given to the Panjabi language by the Sikhs:

Bandaa bhulanhar hai “To err is human.” *Guru/Khalsa Panth bakhshanhar hai*. “The Guru and the Khalsa Panth will forgive sins.”

On such occasions the Sikhs pray to God and say, “O Lord forgive our past sins and show us the righteous path in future” (GGS p. 624)¹⁷⁶

Subject to what has been said above, “sin” in the sense of breach of a religious code (*kurehat*) would be the breach of Sikh *rehat* or inner and outer¹⁷⁷ discipline prescribed in the “*Rehat Maryada*” (disciplinary code) initiated by the Gurus. The *Rehat Maryada*, as prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh, continues to be researched and collated by Khalsa Panth (the collective body of the Sikhs) in accordance with the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. The current authentic version is that of 1945 approved by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (the Supreme Religious Parliament of Sikhs).

Wrong doings resulting from the transgression of inner *rehat* would apply to Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike and are identified with anti-Godly behaviour prompted by any of the five evil influences: lust,

¹⁷⁶ *Pichhle augan bakhsh leh prabh aage marg paawai* (GGS Page 624)

¹⁷⁷ It is necessary to stress that Sikh *rehat* concerns spiritual as well as worldly conduct.

anger, greed, material attachment and pride. “Cruelty, material attachment, greed and anger are the four rivers of fire. Falling into them one is burned O Nanak! One is saved only by holding tight to good deeds” (GGS p. 147)¹⁷⁸

Sinful behaviour results when the universal Divine Consciousness is blurred or blocked out by self-centered ego, and one or more of the lower passions of lust, anger, greed, attachment and false pride take over human thought and conduct.

Breach of the Sikh code is taken very seriously, but in no way can it be interpreted as sin (*paap*) in the traditional sense.

8.4 Sin in Islam

Nature of sins:¹⁷⁹ The greatest sin is not to believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad and to worship anything other than God. Denial of Muhammad’s Prophethood or defiling his name in any way (*Irtidad*) is punishable with death. If a Muslim discards the religion, he can be killed. (SB 20 V.4 B.52)

It is a sin to worship any entity or object other than God.¹⁸⁰ “ Lo! Allah forgiveth not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him”(H.Q 4:48)

Major sins in Islam (*Gunah-e-kabira*) are murder, rape, disobeying parents, illegitimate sex, running away from *Jihad*, drinking¹⁸¹, usury (*ribah HQ 2:275*), lapses from prayer and fasting and learning Quran by heart and then forgetting it. "And who doth greater wrong than he who is reminded of the revelations of his Lord, then turneth from them?"(HQ32: 22)

¹⁷⁸ *Hans het lobh kop chare nadian agg pawe dajhe Nanaka tareey charni lagg* (page 147)

¹⁷⁹ Two angels Munkar and Nakir keep accounts of people’s good and bad deeds. They visit the graves and ask, “Who is your God? What is your religion? and who is your Saviour?” Even the Prophets are prone to sinning. (Al-Anam 76-78, Abraham 42)

¹⁸⁰ In Sura Al-Anam (76-77) we find that Prophet Abraham worshipped stone images and sold them to others when he was following his father’s trade. Later he discarded this practice.

¹⁸¹ Al-Marghinani and some other Muslim scholars believe that liquor made from honey or grains is not prohibited in Islam. Others however interpret the word ‘Khamer’ used in the Holy Quran as applicable to all inebriants.

Lesser Muslim sins (*Gunah-e-Saghira*) are lying, deceiving, anger, gambling, dancing, and trimming a beard.¹⁸² Not to observe the Muslim fast is a sin but there are ways to cancel out this sin. Reading of *Sura-Al-Ikhlās* 200 times daily can wash away all sins committed in 50 years (SM. Chapter 1). Other lesser sins would be related to non-conformance with the religious laws. For example, although a male can marry a non-believer, under no circumstances is a female permitted to marry a non-believer.

¹⁸² Shaving a beard is prohibited “Clip the moustache short and let your beard grow long” (SB781, SM500 and Abu-Awaana). Historians tell us that Prophet Muhammad never shaved his beard. Although a staunch Muslim himself, Aurangzeb, the Emperor of India forbade beards exceeding the length of four fingers.

CHAPTER 9

God's Chosen People; Propagation of Religion and Apostasy

Faith requires certainty. If you follow a path then absolute faith is necessary to follow it wholeheartedly, with body and soul: total faith that the chosen path will lead to the destination promised by the messiah. No sacrifice is too big. Such an absolute faith unfortunately has its reverse side as well. It can give rise to intolerance and prejudice if a magnanimous view is not taken of those who do not follow the path shown by the messiah.

Under this general heading of “God’s chosen people” we tackle some of the more sensitive issues. **In understanding the Islamic viewpoint especially, it is important to bear in mind the time and the place of the origin of the faith and the great threat posed to an enlightened ideology fighting idol worship and ignorance. No religious head accomplished so much, as did Prophet Muhammad in his own lifetime to propagate his faith.** The task of Guru Nanak’s mission nearly eight centuries later, on the eve of the age of discovery, was certainly easier in this respect. The presentation method preferred is to give relevant authentic quotations on various topics for the readers’ knowledge as pointers to further research. The limitations of this method of presentation have already been noted in Chapter 1.

9.1 Sikh view of chosen people

Much of the history of Guru Nanak’s mission is about religious tolerance. Quotations from Guru Granth Sahib will be too numerous to be given here but the most relevant have been given under various headings in this study. Suffice to say that the ten Guru personalities had Muslim and Hindu companions. The Ninth Guru gave his life for other’s right to practise their own religion and the Guru Granth

Sahib includes the teachings of 36 Hindu and Muslim saints in addition to those of the six Gurus.

“ My instruction is for both the Hindus and the Muslims”(GGS p. 479)¹⁸³

“Hindus and Muslims have the same one Lord Master”(GGS p. 1158)¹⁸⁴

“Some call Him Ram others call Him ‘Khuda’. Some serve Him as Gosaeen, others prefer to address Him as ‘Allah’. He is the cause of causes, the Generous Lord. He showers His grace equally on all”(GGS p. 885)¹⁸⁵

So, are the Sikhs God’s chosen people to the exclusion of others?

No, they are not and do not claim to be so. Yet the faith of the Sikhs in their ideology and in Guru Nanak’s mission is no less. The sacrifices made by the young Sikh religion are great indeed and have few parallels in the history of world religions.

As has been mentioned under other headings, the central Sikh belief is in the righteous path leading to union with the Absolute Reality; and the target is to achieve it here and now during this life and not in the hereafter. Human race is one and the Ultimate Reality is one. This eliminates the need for exclusivity.

“The Hindu *Dehura* and the Muslim *Mosque*, The Hindu *Puja* and the Muslim *Namaz* are equally respectable. Consider the whole human race as one ” (Guru Gobind Singh)¹⁸⁶

However, while there is acceptance that different paths can lead to the same door of the One Enlightener¹⁸⁷, the path of the Sikhs is well defined. It requires great discipline, voluntary sacrifice and devotion. That is the Guru’s challenge to his Sikh.

¹⁸³ *Hindu turk dou samjhavau* (GGS page 479)

¹⁸⁴ *Hindu Turk ka Sahib ek* (GGS Page 1158)

¹⁸⁵ *Koi bole Ram Ram koi khudae....* (GGS Page 885)

¹⁸⁶ *Dehura maseet soi, puja o namaz ohi manas ki zat sabhe ekay pehchanvo* (Guru Gobind Singh)

¹⁸⁷ *Baba jai ghar Karte keerat hoi. So ghar raakh vadai toi* (GGS12)

9.2 Islamic view of chosen people

The general view in Islam is that Muslims are chosen people of God. “You are the best community that hath been raised for mankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah” (HQ 3:110) “Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above (all His) creatures.”(HQ 3:33) God Himself praised Prophet Muhammad, “And Lo! Thine verily will be a reward unfailing. And Lo! Thou art of a tremendous nature”(HQ 68:4). Islam offers absolute certainty regarding the highest position of the faith and the Prophet.

According to Islam there are *Momins* and there are *Kafirs*. *Momins* are instructed to treat the *Kafirs* as second class citizens. “None will enter paradise but a Muslim and Allah may support this religion (i.e. Islam) even with a disobedient man.”(SB 297 v.4 b52) Only Prophet Muhammad has been equipped with the correct message by God and will intercede for Muslims. The religious books other than the Holy Quran are corrupted and hence not trustworthy. As for other religions, Prophet Muhammad said, “The religion of other Prophets is like a building imposing and beautiful but for one brick. I am that brick.”(SM5673-76) “If you meet a Muslim on the road stop and give him priority of passage” (SM 537) but “If you meet a Christian or a Jew push him to one side” (SM 5389)

9.3 Concept of a state in Sikhism

“The Khalsa shall rule”, is a Sikh belief. It has been interpreted on the one hand as Sikh rule (i.e. rule of the Sikh ideal society) in their own homeland (Panjab), and on the other, to a regime of a world community of righteous people of truthful conduct, the pure, totally devoted to God realisation. It seems to satisfy both: the Sikh nationalist sentiment as well as the Sikh world-view of an ideal human society united in its God-centredness and in its rich diversity.

The ideal Sikh State would be governed by egalitarian truly God-fearing thinkers committed to the uplift of the whole humanity irrespective of their beliefs or creeds.

“The city without sorrow’, is the name of the town where there is no suffering or anxiety. There are no troubles or taxes on commodities. There is no fear, blemish or downfall. I have found this most excellent city. There is lasting peace and safety. O Siblings of Destiny, God’s Kingdom is steady, stable and eternal. There is no second or third status; all are equal there. That city is populous and eternally famous. Its inhabitants are wealthy and contented. They go about freely. They see the Lord everywhere and no one blocks their way. Says Ravi Das, whoever is a citizen there, is a friend of mine.”¹⁸⁸ (GGS p. 345)

“All are my equal partners, no one is persona non-grata” (GGS p.97)¹⁸⁹

Such is the Khalsa ideal state, the ultimate goal of the human society.

9.3.1 Concept of a Muslim State

“God wants submission for man, for which He has laid down as a clear path in the message of Islam (*sic*). Secular politics remove the affairs of the world from the sovereignty of God and place them under the human control. Such an approach clashes with the very basics of an Islamic state. The Islamic state backed by its moral and military power is constantly engaged in spreading Islam, in winning adherents and weakening the enemies. It is therefore an active state whose authority extends into the very private lives of individuals. Whatever has been decreed by Sharia is to be enforced compulsorily.” (CIS page 114-115)

“To the Muslim jurist the world was therefore sharply divided into two zones: Pax Islamica (*dar-al-Islam*) comprising the lands under direct or indirect Islamic rule, and the rest of the world (*dar-al-harb*, or enemy territory). The first was at war with the other, a state of war which was to continue until the latter would be absorbed by the former” (CIS page 54)

¹⁸⁸ *Begampura sehar ko nao.....* (GGS p.345)

¹⁸⁹ *Sabhe sanjhiwal sadaen koi na disay bahra jeo* (GGS p. 97)

“In the rule of an Islamic state, there is no place for any other religion than Islam”¹⁹⁰ In a Muslim state the non-believers (*Zimmis*) are forbidden from the following:

1. Carrying weapons 2. riding a horse 3. building a temple/ church etc 4. engaging in public worship 5. ringing bells/ conch shells or beating drums that annoy the Muslims and 6. wearing a coloured cloth (*Ghiyar*). 7. They must wear a special girdle called *Zunnar*.¹⁹¹

Muslims have to fight against the *Kafirs* until the later submit. (HQ9: 29) A *Kafir's* repentance is not acceptable (HQ3: 90).

9.4 Other religions: Sikh view

Although Sikhism differs from other religions in many ways, it accords full respect to all religions. It defends the right of free belief, pursuit of knowledge and free enquiry.

“The world is ablaze; O Lord save it through your benediction. Through whichever door (religion) humankind seeks deliverance, save it that way.” (*Guru Amar Das*)

However, the intrinsic human values of Sikhism are such that these will constantly put Sikhism on a path of confrontation with theopolitical systems, which are less tolerant of fundamental human rights. **The Sikh history so far has been a continual struggle for self-determination, human equality and freedom. The Sikh institutions and *Rehat Maryada* (code of conduct) defy discrimination and oppression in any form. To that extent therefore, harmonious co-existence of Sikhism with other religious and political systems is conditional and will remain so.**

¹⁹⁰ “History of the Punjab” Punjabi University Patiala. Page 231

¹⁹¹ Muslim Governments today do not apply some of these restrictions strictly.

9.4.1 Other religions: Islamic view

There are differences of interpretation of the Holy Quran among Muslims themselves on this point. The Islamic stance needs to be understood from the Islamic world-view. The staunch Islamic belief is that Islam is the one and only correct path to the ultimate goal of this life. Followers of other religious ideologies (including the Sikhs) would hold similar subjective views about their own chosen paths. The difficulty arises when religious codes legislate for open discrimination against other systems. Since the Prophet imposed *Jazia* (a special tax) only on non-Muslims in the last two years of his rule (HQ 9:29), this is seen as a form of discrimination against other religions.¹⁹²

Jews have not been addressed favourably in the Holy Quran. The Prophet said to the Jews, “If you embrace Islam, you will be safe. You should know that the earth belongs to Allah and His Apostle, and I want to expel you from this land”(SB 392 V.4 B.53). They were banished “because they were opposed to Allah and His Messenger”(HQ59: 4) “Allah gives His Messenger Lordship over whom He will.”(HQ59: 6) Muslims are instructed to do the opposite of what the Jews do (SB 786 V.7.B72)

It is, however, also a fact that a learned Jewish priest named Mukhayriq recognised Muhammad as a Prophet, bestowed seven gardens on Him, fought shoulder to shoulder with Him in the battle of *Uhud*, although, it was Sabbath when fighting is forbidden for the Jews.

About the *Khawarij*, a sect of Muslims who deserted Prophet Muhammad and apostatized, the Prophet said, “When you meet them, kill them for in their killing you would get a reward with Allah on the day of Judgement.”

(SM2328) Following a religion other than Islam is not acceptable to God. (HQ3: 85). “We Muslims are the last people to come into the world but (will be) the foremost (on the day of resurrection)”. (SB 239)

¹⁹²Such areas of possible conflict would continue to be addressed by scholars of all religions in a spirit of interfaith tolerance and understanding.

There is also repeated stress that the religion of Abraham, to which Judaism and Christianity (which springs from Judaism) trace their origin, is the only true religion (The Glorious Quran page 33)

9.5 Religious war: Sikh view

Sikhism is opposed to spreading religion through war. The nearest concept to *Jihad* (see under Islam below) is *dharam yudh* (fight for justice or the righteous cause). Nevertheless, this is another area of theological difference between Islam and Sikhism.

Use of force for propagating religion or for changing another's ideology or point of view runs contrary to Sikh belief and practice. The divinely inspired compositions of Muslim and Hindu saints have been included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and given the same status as the hymns of the Sikh Gurus. Sikhism, therefore, demonstrably preaches that no single ideology has the monopoly of access to God or the Ultimate Truth. The Sikh Guru went further when Guru Tegh Bahadur (Nanak IX) gave his life to uphold another's right of worship in his own way.

However, Sikhism is not opposed to the use of force *per se* (albeit strictly as a last resort) for defending own or another's religion or civil rights against an aggressor. A reminder about the background to Sikhism would be relevant. In Guru Nanak's time, religious ideologies born out of Hindu/Muslim entrenched and inflexible attitudes stifled research, acquisition of knowledge and the freedom of the spirit. People had moved away from the true spirit of religion. Guru Nanak challenged the fanaticism and the rigidities of the then current religious thought and promoted an atmosphere of research and reason. His teachings were the very antithesis of extremism. Sikhism opposed aggressive approach to religious conversions.

“His was the first and the last successful attempt to bring together the Hindus and the Muslims in a common fold of spiritual and social brotherhood”¹⁹³

¹⁹³ The Delhi Sultanet Page 569 quoted in The History of the Punjab Vol. 3 page 313 Punjabi University

Sikh Gurus were fully aware of the need for the use of arms for defending freedom of religious ideology and the geo-political implications which were bound to flow from it. The concept of Khalsa Raj and the just theo-political aspirations of the Sikhs have brought (and continue to bring) the Sikh nation into armed conflict with authoritarian regimes. In certain circumstances, when all other means have failed, resort to arms is considered legitimate. Guru Tegh Bahadur's injunction is:

"Frighten none and accept fear from no-one." (GGS p. 1427)¹⁹⁴

Due to the extent of religious, social and administrative oppression in the Indian society based on caste and creed, Guru Nanak had already foreseen that situations arise where armed resistance would be unavoidable. He, therefore, told those who wanted to follow in his footsteps:

"If you wish to play the game of love (with the Lord), then place your head on the palm of your hand and come my way." (GGS p. 1412)¹⁹⁵

Guru Nanak's followers could not shirk their responsibility towards other fellow beings nor could they accept fear from anyone. Guru Nanak spoke out against social, political and administrative injustice and he expected his followers to do the same. The Sikh Gurus and the *bhagats* (saints), whose compositions are recorded in the Holy Granth, were well aware of the need for resorting to arms for defending human rights and the freedom of religious ideologies.

"The true warrior is one who fights in defence of the downtrodden." (GGS p. 1105)¹⁹⁶

"When all attempts to obtain justice fail, it is legitimate to move the hand to the hilt of the sword." (Guru Gobind Singh's *Zafarnama* to Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb).¹⁹⁷

Patiala

¹⁹⁴ *Bhae kahu kau det neh, neh bhay manat aan* (GGS 1427)

¹⁹⁵ *Jao tao prem khelan ka chao, sir dhar tali gali mori aao* (GGS 1412)

¹⁹⁶ *Sura so pehchaniya jo lare deen ke het.* (Bhagat Kabir. GGS p.1105)

The 19th Century German writer Schulse supports the basic premise that, the state being absolutely supreme and incapable of doing wrong, is misconceived and dangerous (Deutsches Staatsrecht Vol. I Sec 16) The whole Sikh history is a *struggle* against this dangerous misconception.¹⁹⁸ The Sikh ideology preaching human equality and freedom was also bound to lead to geo-political aspirations. Armed clash with oppressive regimes was inevitable.

A Sikh is to fight for justice and when engaged in the battlefield has to respect human values. The sword is not to be used in hatred or for taking revenge. Guru Gobind Singh's follower Bhai Kanhaya offered water in the battlefield even to the enemies and the Guru approved this as a meritorious act. Indeed, he supplied Bhai Ghanhaya with balm for applying this to the wounded without distinction between friend and foe. No one is to be attacked simply because that person does not believe in the Sikh religion or worships differently.

9.5.1 Religious war: Islamic view

The word *jihad* literally means 'to try one's utmost'. Jihad is defined¹⁹⁹ by H.G.Koenigsberger as "Spreading Islam by war." It appears to have been derived from the word 'Qatilo' (HQ 9: 29).

"The various means employed by an Islamic state to spread Islam are called *jihad*, if they involve strife and struggle. The more popular form of *jihad* is holy war"(CIS p.54)

"Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture as believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, and forbid not that which Allah hath forbidden by His Messenger, and follow not the religion of truth, until they pay the tribute readily, being brought low." (HQ 9:29)²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Choon kar az hameh hilde'darguzasht.Halal ast burdan b-shamshir dast (Guru Gobind Singh's Zafarnama to Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb)

¹⁹⁸ Sirdar Kapur Singh in *The Sikh Review* of August 1974 p 7.

¹⁹⁹ Page 185 of 'Medieval Europe.' Others define it as "establishing Islamic system of life" (Sura Al-Nisa 4: 76, 91, Sura Al-Anfal 8:39-, sura Al-Fateh 48:16 and Sura Al-Tehrim 9)

²⁰⁰ "No Muslim should be killed for killing an infidel"(SB 283 V.4 B.52)

Some Muslims do not accept these definitions and quote *La Iqra fi al-din*. (No compulsion in religion HQ2: 256) They interpret *jihad* as 'spiritual war'. Others quote, "Now when ye meet them in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, when ye have routed them, then making fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom till the war lay down its burdens. That (is the ordinance). And if Allah willed He could have punished them (without you) but (thus it is ordained) that He may try some of you by means of others. And those who are slain in the way of Allah, He rendereth not their actions vain." (HQ 47:4)

There are 92 *ahadis* (traditions) on *jihad* and *Mujahedin* (crusaders) in Sahih Muslim. *Jihad* is a religious duty of every Muslim. The Holy Quran says:

"Count not those who were slain in God's way as dead, but rather living with their Lord, by Him provided, rejoicing in the bounty that God has given them"²⁰¹

"Allah has undertaken to look after the affairs of one who goes out for *jihad* believing in Him and affirming the truth of His apostle. He is committed to His care and He will either admit him to paradise or bring him back to his home with a reward of booty" (SM 4626)

"The wounds of those who die in *jihad* will smell of musk on the day of Judgement" (SM 4630, SB 238, 59 V.4 B.52). "Leaving for *jihad* in the way of Allah in the morning or in the evening will merit a reward better than the world and all that is in it." (SM 4639). "*Jihad* merits the highest position in paradise" (SM 4645) "Paradise is under the shadow of the swords" (SM 4314 SB 73 V.4 B.52)

Regarding the spoils of war the Holy Quran says, "Now enjoy ye what you have won, as lawful and good" (HQ 8:69,48:15). "If a town disobeys Allah and the Messenger one fifth of the booty seized

²⁰¹The Koran, Interpreted by Arthur J Arberry, p66 Oxford University Press 1983.

therefrom is for Allah and His Apostle and the rest is for you” said Muhammad (SM 4346)²⁰²

9.6 Apostasy: Sikh view

The Sikh position has been discussed to some extent under “Sin”. To give up one’s religion and to join another is a matter of human choice and not a sin or a crime *per se*. However, the motivation, the intent, the actions or (more often) non-actions, which may have given rise to apostasy, may fall into one of the categories of “sin,” immoral behaviour or negligence. If an act or omission soils the human soul, places a burden on the spirit preventing it from rising to meet the Lord, then it is a “sin” and waste of this opportunity of human life.

According to Sikhism the soul keeps a record of its own (good or bad) deeds. “The oft repeated actions are engraved on the heart, the person reaps what has been sown (in this life), and says Nanak, through the Lord’s Will, the soul comes and goes (in cycles of birth and death).” (GGS p. 4)²⁰³

Anyone who breaches the Sikh *Rehat Maryada* must be re-baptised if the breaches concern the four main taboos (see Chapter 12). Lesser breaches are punishable through the “*tankhah*” process, which usually entails some community service. While it is true that the Sikh ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, accepted to be whipped by the *Jathedar* (head) of Akal Takhat (“Immortal Throne”, the seat of temporal/spiritual authority of the Khalsa) for breaches of Sikh moral code, physical punishment is non-existent these days. Nevertheless, apostasy is taken by the Sikh community as a sign of ineffectiveness on the part of the Sikh preachers.

9.6.1 Apostasy: Islamic view

In his book *Murtad Ki Saza* (punishment for an apostate),

²⁰² The Muslims fought 82 battles in all in the time of Prophet’s life. Muhammad fought personally in 26 (they are called ghazwat). 56 called Sariya were fought by his commanders under His orders.

²⁰³ *Kar kar karna likh leh jaho.....*(GGS 4)

Maulana Moududi quotes Quranic verses *Ahadis*, the *Fiqah* and the rulings of the *Caliphs* and concludes that apostasy is punishable with death in Islam. According to him “belief in Islam is not a personal faith. It is co-equal with membership in a social order that seeks fulfillment through the state. A change of faith, therefore, is tantamount to treachery, making such a traitor a potential ally of the enemy” (pages 9-51). No one is excluded from this punishment. “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves.” (HQ 48: 29). “Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed are *Kafirs*”(HQ 5:45)

“Kill an apostate but do not burn him for fire is Allah’s agency for punishing the sinners” (Trimidhi Vol.1 1357,SB 1219)²⁰⁴ According to An-Nawari’s Hadis No. 14 (iii) A Muslim is not to be killed unless he/she “forsakes his /her religion and abandons the community”.

“An Islamic state based on doctrinal values conceives its task primarily as a medium for spreading, establishing and preserving divine truth. This duty has both internal and external ramifications. Internally, the doctrine of apostasy keeps Muslims as Muslims. They have no right to change faith, and since no political parties are permitted in an Islamic milieu, the right to follow a movement or political outlook other than Islamic is irrelevant. For apostasy at least the punishment is death. Thus, a fundamental principle of a doctrinal Islamic state is to invest actively its resources in combating un-Islamic ideas and movements.” (CIS Page 185)

“The doctrine of apostasy, virtually makes submission of the believers total and irreversible” (CIS page 200)

²⁰⁴ According to *Sharia* the penalty for denying the Prophethood of Muhammad is death. Some *Ulemahs* even interpret the giving up of Islam or writing against Islam (as Sulman Rushdie did in Satanic verses) as heresy punishable by death. A man named Sadek Abdel Karim Malallah was executed in 1992 in Saudi Arabia for casting aspersions on the authority of the Prophet .

CHAPTER 10

Death. Doomsday. Heaven and Hell

10.1 Beyond empirical existence

Most religions, including Islam, believe in other transcendental planes of existence and mystical beings including messengers of evil and good. Heaven and hell are facets of this belief. The religious pre-occupation with other worldliness supersedes the focus on the empirical world and its social and economic priorities. This is more so in the case of the “opt-out” monastic, ascetic sects and cults of the Indian variety than Islam and Sikhism.

There is mention in Sikhism of other beings and planes of existence in God’s infinite creation; however, generally, Sikhism based on a loving and ever present (*haazar naazar*) God-experience in the here and now, is much less concerned with “other worldliness” than other religious ideologies. The stress is on this life, this existence and achievement of a state of physical/spiritual equipoise through constant immersion in the Divine Being (Naam). Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s founding composition *Japuji*, the basis for all Sikh thought regarding God, His creation and the futility of metaphysical speculations, is ineffable. Speculation and pretence of knowledge of the Unknowable is foolish, says Guru Nanak. Only one who is as great as the Lord can know His limit, and there is none, for all and everything is within Him.

The pain of death is mentioned in both religions but is dealt with differently. The *kafir* (non-believer) in Islam, and *manmukh* (one who is a slave of his own ego in this life) in Sikhism, face terrible penalties. The wording of some of the penalties and frightful post-death related experiences of the soul is very similar but entirely for different underlying reasons. Certainly, in the case of Sikhism, this pain is self-inflicted because it arises from the spiritual/mental make

up which results from own actions in life. According to the nature of ones thoughts and actions, the spirit can be darkened, confused and burdened or, conversely, it can be alleviated to higher planes (purified) through truthful conduct, service and humility. It can be detached from self-centredness (*haumai*) and merged harmoniously with the Universal Spirit.

10.2 Death: Sikh view

Death need not be a painful experience according to Sikh teachings.

“ Says Kabir, death, which frightens the world, is (the harbinger of) bliss for me” (GGS p.1365)²⁰⁵

Pain of birth and death arises from a sense of deception (ignorance). Departure is much more painful for one who is attached to this material existence and is not prepared to depart, nor has made preparations for departure. “ Mortal beings are bound by the bonds of doubt and attachment. When life becomes a dream, the blind man babbles and grieves in vain” (GGS p. 885)²⁰⁶

The physical pain is magnified many times through mental and spiritual agony. “This changing empirical existence is deceptive, and there is much pain in birth and death. But the Guru (by teaching me how to meditate on the True Name) got rid of the pain of birth and death and also removed the fear (arising from deceptive perception of existence) of death and departure.” (Bhai Gurdas Vaar1.1)²⁰⁷

After death, the soul undergoes torment and re-enters cycles of birth and death in different life forms if it is unable to achieve equipoise in this life. But for one, who has established a harmonized relationship in this life with the Creator, death is a call to eternal bliss. “Meditating on the Lord’s Name, you shall live, and the all

²⁰⁵ *Kabir jis marne te jagg dare mere man anand*(GGS 1365)

²⁰⁶ “*Bharam Moh ke bandhe bandh supan bhia bhakhlai andh*” (GGS Page 885)

²⁰⁷ *Sansa eh sansar hai janam maran wich dukh sabaya Janam maran bhao katya, sansa rog vyog mitaya*
(Bhai Gurdas Vaar1.1)

powerful Time shall not consume you (i.e. you will be freed from the birth/death cycle)” (GGS p. 885)²⁰⁸

10.2.1 Death: Islamic view

In Islam the pain of death and what happens afterwards is mentioned in vivid detail and is awe inspiring. Some examples are given below.

Prophet Muhammad considered death to be a very painful experience²⁰⁹. Al-Ghazali (page 42-43) writes: God asked Abraham, “How did you find death?” Abraham replied “Like a skewer passed into damp wood and then tugged”. When Moses died God asked him, “How did you find death?” He replied, “I found myself to be like a sparrow being roasted alive unable either to live or fly away.” In reply to a similar question Umar replied, “Death is a thorny twig made to enter the stomach of a man so that its thorns become attached to the arteries. Then it is pulled with a force.”

According to Durra, the souls of the dead believers remain in their graves until the Day of Judgement while those of the unbelievers congregate near a well known as *Barhut* on the seventh earth. (According to the Quran there are seven earths just as there are seven heavens HQ65: 12)

When an unbeliever travels into the after-life “angels strong and severe” (HQ 66:6) bearing “garments of fire”(HQ: 22-19) and “mail coats of tar”(HQ: 14:49-50) beset him on all sides and curse him. He is then beaten between the eyes and dispatched to hell.

The deeds of the righteous believer are recorded in a book called *Illiyin* (HQ83: 18), which is draped in silken cloth (HQ 83:20). They go to heaven where “They are given to drink pure wine sealed, whose seal is musk”(HQ83: 25-26) The deeds of an unbeliever are

²⁰⁸ *Jap Gobind Gopal Lal, ram nam simar too jivehen phir na khaaeyee maha kal* (GGS p. 885)

²⁰⁹ On his death bed Muhammad had a vessel of water near him. He dipped his hand in it time and again and wiped his face uttering, “O Lord God mitigate for me the agonies of death” (SB. Riqaq 42). According to Sahih Muslim (See Salat 13) angel Azrael took Muhammad to Al-daraja Wal-wasila (an exalted position in heaven which may be occupied by one man only).

recorded in a black book known as *Sijjin* (HQ83: 8) draped in black cloth and glowing charcoal is lying on it. "They verily will burn in hell"(HQ83: 16). Ninety-nine dragons (One dragon has ninety-nine serpents each having seven heads) maul and savage the unbeliever till the day of resurrection (Al-Hakim & Trimidhi 159)

10.3 Disposal of the dead: Sikh view

In Sikhism death is union of the human soul with the Universal Soul. Life is God's gift. When He withdraws His power, the light is extinguished and the soul is drawn to Him.

"He stages the play of breath everywhere. Withdrawing His power, He lets the beings crumble" (GGS p. 1033)²¹⁰

The last rites in Sikhism may be compared to a type of bridal party send-off for the soul to meet the Lord. Sikh teachings attach no significance to the disposal of a dead body. They consider the soul to be imperishable and all-important. Once the soul is gone, the body has no significance. Traditionally, the Sikhs cremate their dead or submerge the body in a flowing river or the sea. It would not be inconceivable, if a dead Sikh is buried in the middle of a desert country like Arabia where no alternative is available

"Some are cremated, some are buried, some are eaten by dogs, some are washed away by water, others are thrown into the wells,²¹¹ O Nanak, it is not known, where they go and into what they merge" (GGS p. 648)²¹²

²¹⁰ *Pavne Khel kia sabh thaayeen kala khinch rahaeynda....* (GGS Page 1033)

²¹¹ The Parsi people daub a dead body with yogurt and leave it on top of a grilled well (Hassan). The vultures and crows eat it up.

²¹² *ik dajhe ik dabeeye ikna kute khaey ik pani wich usateye* (GGS Page 648)

10.3.1 Disposal of the dead: Islamic view

The Muslims bury their dead.²¹³ They do not cremate their dead and consider cremating of dead bodies to be a sacrilege. At the time of burial in a grave the face of the dead person must be kept towards Mecca. Giving the reason for this the Holy Quran says, “And because the hour will come, there is no doubt thereof, and because Allah will raise those who are in the graves” (HQ22: 7)²¹⁴

10.4 Visiting graves or tombs etc.: Sikh view

Sikhs do not worship anything or anyone other than One God. Therefore, worshipping of graves or monuments erected to honour the dead is forbidden. They cremate their dead and hence do not erect any graves or mausoleums.

“Do not suffer from duality, worship none other than One God, and do not visit tombs or crematoriums.” (GGS p. 634)²¹⁵

“O foolish one, union with God is not achieved in graveyards or crematoriums”. (GGS p. 1190)²¹⁶

“Develop trusting love (in the Lord) and never worship graves, tombs and Hindu convents (*dev-mandars*) or places where yogis reside (*Maths*).” (Guru Gobind Singh)²¹⁷

It needs to be understood, however, that the Sikhs, as part of the Sikh heritage, do not forget the great deeds of those who lived before. Therefore, the Islamic sentiment about remembering parents or dear ones would be shared by the Sikhs, albeit, not by worshipping at monuments but by remembering their positive achievements and good deeds. Such remembrance may be in the

²¹³ The dead person is tortured in his grave for the wailing of his relatives done over him (SB 379. V.2 B.23). Everything of the human body will decay except the coccyx bone(of the tail) and from that bone Allah will re-construct the whole body (SB 338 V.6 B.60)

²¹⁴ “The hour will not be established until you fight with the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say, O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him” (SB177 V.4 B.52).

²¹⁵ *Dubidha na parao, Har bin hor na poojo Mari masan na jai* (GGS 634)

²¹⁶ *Mari masani moorai jog nahi* (GGS 1190)

²¹⁷ *Puran prem prateet sajay barat gor marhi matt bhoor na mane* (Guru Gobind Singh).

context of the daily supplication (*Ardaas*) before the Lord. Indeed great martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for upholding the freedom to practise religion or who fought for the downtrodden, are remembered daily in the Sikh *Ardaas*. But there is a strict Sikh injunction about not erecting or worshipping shrines for the dead because it leads to superstition and to diversion from the Lord's Name. Such monuments may even be regarded as a form of idol worship.

10.4.1 Visiting graves and tombs etc: Islamic view

Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "I once forbade you to visit the graves but you should now visit them for they remind you of the after life" (Muslim-Janaiz 100, Hakim 1-376). "My intercession becomes mandatory for all who visit my grave" said Muhammad (Al-Hakim and Al-Trimidhi 148) "Whoever visits my grave at Medina, for him shall I intercede and bear witness on the day of arising" (Zabidi 10-364). The prophet Himself used to pray at graves (SB339, 405 V.2 B.23). Praying at the graves of deserters is forbidden. "And never (O Muhammad) pray for one of them who dieth, nor stand by his grave. Lo! They disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and they died while they were evil doers." (HQ 9:84)

It is a Muslim doctrine that the torment of the sinners abates every Friday when the wandering souls of the dead return to their graves. Muslims therefore visit the graves of their dear ones on Fridays and recite verses on the graves from the second chapter of the Quran (The Cow). Some also recite suras 112, 113 and 114. "Whoever visits his parents' graves every Friday shall be forgiven his sins" (Tabarani Saghir ii-69)

10.5 Doomsday: Sikh view

The question of a doomsday or an apocalyptic end to the world does not arise in Sikhism. Birth and death are like a change of clothes by the soul and the final destination (objective of life) is to break away from ego and merge with the Universal Being. There is no doomsday for the soul. Expansion and contraction of creation, including all life, is within God's Will and it would be futile for human beings to speculate about such events in the cosmos.

The concept of a dooms-day becomes irrelevant in Sikhism because of the basic Sikh tenet of the main purpose of this life. The final destination of the soul is re-union with the Creator when doubt (*sansa*), regarding the Oneness of the Creator and the created, is removed. The Sikh belief is that the soul has been separated from the Absolute due to the perception of dualism (*dwait*) in creation: the trick played by relativity on the senses so that the Creator (the Absolute) is no longer seen in the created (the transient). The soul becomes more attached with the ever changing material world (*sansar*) than with the never changing Timeless One. The span of human life is the opportunity to achieve equipoise (*Sahij anand*) through removal of duality and realisation of the one (i.e. re-union with the Lord). The transmigrations of the soul through births and deaths and life forms continue until this union is achieved. The soul is divine and never dies but can become one with the Supreme Soul of God (*Parmatma*) in this life. What is important for a Sikh, is the opportunity offered in the human form here and now and not speculations about what lies beyond death.

God is the “Guru”, the Enlightener, the Giver of knowledge; but the individual must progress through own actions. Thus a Sikh is in no privileged position regarding salvation than a non-Sikh. Just being born a Sikh or becoming a Sikh is not enough because “Only deeds done in this life are judged after death.” (GGS p. 464)²¹⁸

Sikhism lays stress on *rehat*, the inner and outer discipline that leads to truthful and fearless conduct in the service of the Lord and fellow humanity with humility (*sewa*). Such conduct is the path to union with God. A Sikh following the Guru’s way is not concerned with a dooms-day but only with that single project of this life - getting merged into the Supreme Spirit.

²¹⁸ *Aage karni keerat vachaiy* (GGS 464)

10.5.1 Doomsday: Islamic view

The imminence of the apocalypse²¹⁹ is a recurrent theme in the Holy Quran

(e.g. HQ 16:27, HQ 54: 46).²²⁰ Muslims believe that there is eternal life or eternal damnation after death (HQ4: 56-57). On the day of the Last Judgement angel Israfil²²¹ will bring everybody to life (HQ 22: 7). On that day Prophet Muhammad will intercede on behalf of the Muslims. The time of the dooms-day is not mentioned²²². When some people asked, "When will it come to pass?" (HQ79: 42), the Prophet said, "The knowledge of it is with Allah only..... It may be that the hour is nigh" (HQ33: 63,7:187). There is a difference of opinion about where the souls live between death and dooms-day.

What happens on dooms-day is awe-inspiring. When the trumpet is blown by the angel for the first time (*Al Nafkha Al- Ula*) everybody will fall down in a swoon (HQ 39:68). Then the trumpet will sound again (*Al Nafkha Al Thanya*) and people will stand up (HQ13: 16). After coming to life people will wander for 40 years (*Barzakh*). Then they will assemble and mingle together like thickly scattered moths. They will perspire so copiously that some will disappear in the sweat and others will stand in sweat up to their ears (SB Risaq 47, Muslim Jana 6) and then the record of their deeds (*Emal Nama*)²²³ will be shown to them (HQ17: 13,14,71). Good and bad actions will be judged and punishments will be meted out (HQ23: 102-104, HQ 7: 8-9). Whose misdeeds outweigh their good deeds

²¹⁹ According to the Quran on the dooms' day "Heaven will be cleft asunder (82:1), Heavenly bodies will fall (81:2), Mountains will fly like carded wool (81:3), Oceans will pour forth (81:6), infernal fires will be stroked (81:11) and heaven will move downwards (81:12)

²²⁰ The word *Qiyamat* (Dooms day) is mentioned in the Holy Quran 70 times. It has 75 other synonyms mentioned in the Holy Quran. "We send Prophets and messengers to people to inform and put fear in them". (Sura Al-Inam 6: 49)

²²¹ Al Ghazali names the angel 'Seraphiel'

²²² Imam Ghazali author of *Kitab-ul dhikar-al mawt wa ma badahu* (death and after-life) is of the opinion that the age of the world is 7,000 years. This is also the common view of the Ulema (Muslim scholars). Suyuti says that the judgement will occur before the end of the 15th Islamic Century (See *Al-Kashaf-an Mujawazat-II-86*)

²²³ Allah's Prophet was asked, "What is the best deed?". He replied, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle (Muhammad)." "What is the next goodness?" He replied, "To participate in *Jihad* (religious fighting) in Allah's cause." (SB 25 V.1 B.2) Abusing a Muslim is *Fusuq* (an evil deed) and killing a Muslim is *Kufr*. (SB46) No good deeds done on other days are superior to those done on the first 10 days of Dhul Hijja. (SB 86. V.2 B.65)

will be dragged by a black creature and cast into the hellfire of *Dozakh* (HQ 69: 30-33).

The last trumpet will sound ushering in the day of judgement. Children's hair will turn gray, hills will become running sand, and Heavens will rent asunder. (HQ 73:17-18) Every nursing mother will forget her nursling and every pregnant one will deliver her burden. (HQ22: 2) Mankind will be shown their deeds. (HQ 99:6) Their actions will be weighed in scales (HQ 21:47) and a final judgement sending souls to heaven or hell shall be decreed. (HQ 82:13-14)

It is also mentioned that Jesus will come on the Doom's Day. (HQ 4: 160) He will preach Islam and people will put their faith in him. (SB656) He will abolish Jazia. (SB425 V3 B.34).

10.6 Heaven and Hell: Sikh view

Sikh thought, despite use of the traditional Hindu/Islamic terminology sometimes, centres very much around the principle of "What you sow, so shall you reap". Heaven and hell are the self-inflicted bliss or the torment respectively, which reflect the nature of the deeds done in this life. Deeds done in self-centered pride and arrogance (*haumai*) certainly do weigh heavily on the human soul and torment it, pushing it further away from the state of equipoise (the main objective of human life) towards lower life forms.

Sikh belief in the transmigration of the soul rules out the traditional concepts of heaven and hell after death as some interim or final destination for the soul. Rather, Sikhism has redefined heaven and hell as extremes of experience of the human soul in this life due to egocentric thoughts and conduct motivated by those thoughts (i.e. deeds done in *haumai*). Egocentricity (*haumai*) binds the soul to individual existence; it darkens the soul, burdens it and weighs it down. "This is the nature of ego (*haumai*) that man goes about his business in egocentric pride. And thus human ego shackles the

human soul to remain in the cycle of birth and death.” (GGS p. 466)²²⁴

The main objective of religion (*dharam*) is to remove this duality²²⁵ (*dwait*), this wall between “I” and the universal Truth. If individual existence (predominance of “I and me”) is reconciled with or lost in God awareness (*Naam*), then heaven and hell become irrelevant. This concept may be approached in Sikhism from different angles.

“How can the human soul reach the ultimate Truth and how can this wall (of duality) be brought down. Follow the Divine Will, O Nanak, for that is ordained.” (GSS p. 1)²²⁶

To understand Sikh thought on what happens after death we need to understand the Guru’s reference to *dharam Raj* (the divine law). Some academics have too often made an analogy for Dharam Raj to the Hindu belief in a personified otherworldly entity mentioned in Vedic literature. This is a mistaken approach to Sikh theology.

Let us refer back to the Sikh concepts of *Hukam* (God’s will) and *dharam*. All that is created, seen and unseen, is part of the Absolute Truth, the Singularity of God’s Being. All creation follows pre-determined and pre-defined laws. We see these laws at work in all spheres of life. These laws are at work within the concept of the Divine Will (*Hukam Razai*). “All (things created) are subject to His Will and nothing is outside His Will.” (GGS p. 1)²²⁷

It is in this sense that this existence, this creation, is regarded as real - ever changing but real. What is false is also clearly stated in *Gurbani*. In this sense, if what is “natural” is equated to what is within *Hukam* (Divine Will), and therefore subject to the laws of *dharam*, then nothing is in the realm of “supernatural”. Once that knowledge, the Guru’s knowledge or *Gurmatt*, is fully accepted and

²²⁴ *Haumai eha jaat hai haumai karam kamae Haumai ehi bandhana phir phir joni pai* (GGS 466)

²²⁵ Due to egocentricity, the human mind suffers from “duality” (referred to as *dwait* in GGS). *Dwait* separates the Creator from the created. *Dwait* is the main cause of mental and behavioural conflict. Only when “I” is replaced by “Him” within and without, is this duality removed.

²²⁶ *Kiv sachiara hoiay kiv koore tute pal Hukam razai chalana Nanak likhia naal* (GGS 1)

²²⁷ *Hukmai andar sabh ko bahar Hukam na koi* (GGS 1)

adopted then it automatically frees one from the fear of the “unknown”. Of course there is a great deal in the seen and the unseen creation, which the human senses do not pick up. If there is full acceptance that all beings and things, seen and unseen through human experience, nevertheless, are within His domain and Will, then proximity to the Creator (i.e. becoming *Khalsa*²²⁸ of the Guru) will free the human soul from fear of any sort.

Reward and punishment which appears to be the idea behind heaven and hell, in Sikhism is only that which relates to the universal maxim of “what you sow, so shall you reap”.

“What one sows, so one reaps, for this (life) is a field of deeds”. (GGS p. 134)²²⁹

According to *Gurbani*, the transmigration of the soul is also subject to the rule of *dharam*, which may be observed in this life. References to heaven and hell using the traditional idiom are only metaphorical in *Gurbani* to illustrate the joy or suffering of the soul in this life or as it goes through other life forms. There are no heaven and hell abodes for the soul in the strict sense as are mentioned in Islam or Christianity. Contentment or suffering is self-inflicted through birth/death cycles. Separation from the Universal Being (*Naam*) is hell and immersion in that Being is heaven and it is achievable in this life. Some quotations from Guru Granth Sahib follow to illustrate the Sikh concepts of heaven and hell.

“Why dwell on (the topics of) hell and heaven, for the saintly people shun both. Through the Grace of the Guru they care not for anything else.”

(GGS p. 963)²³⁰

“Says Kabir, through the Guru’s Grace, I have opted out from heaven and hell...” (GGS p. 1370)²³¹

²²⁸ “Says Kabir, the persons who imbibe God’s love and devotion become His beings (“*khalsay*” may be interpreted both, as the “pure” and in a proprietary sense as “directly attached to or belonging to” as often used by the Sikh Guru personalities.) “*Kaho Kabir jan bhae khalsay, prem bhagat jeh jani* (GGS 654).

²²⁹ *Jeha bejai so lune, karama sandra khet:* (GGS 134)

²³⁰ *Kavan narak kia surag bichara, santan do-oo raade. Ham kahoo ki kan na kadhte apne Gur parsade* (GGS 963)

²³¹ *Kabir surag narak te mai rahio, Satgur kai parsad.....* (GGS 1370)

“Heaven is where (O Lord) Your praise is sung”. (GGS p. 749)²³²

Numerous similar quotations may be cited from Guru Granth Sahib to show the manner in which heaven and hell are interpreted in *Gurbani* - the Guru's Word. The self-inflicted torment a soul can undergo as a result of a wasted life is great. Indeed, some passages from Guru Nanak Dev Ji's *Assa di Vaar* sung in Gurdwaras in the morning, come close to the descriptions of hell given in Islamic teachings (e.g. GGS p. 464)²³³ but are interpreted differently as the suffering a life form undergoes in this life or the next.

“So long as the mind craves for heaven, there is no chance of meeting the Lord”(GGS p.325)²³⁴

10.6.1 Heaven and Hell: Islamic view

Islam and many other religions believe in otherworldly abodes for the human soul after death. Such transcendental existence is basically divided into heaven and hell called (in that order), *jannat* and *dozakh* respectively in Islam, and *swarag* and *narak* respectively in the Hindu tradition²³⁵.

According to Islam heaven is a place of great comfort, pleasure and (even sensual) joy. Hell (*Dozakh*) is a frightening place where the soul goes through all sorts of tortures and torments. A wall known as *Eraf* stands between hell and heaven (HQ7: 46) Even if the Muslims do not repent after committing sins, they will not be kept in the *Dozakh* forever (HQ 99-7)²³⁶

“Not even a single Muslim will remain in the *Dozakh* forever” (Ahya-al-Alum by Imam Ghazali vol. 2 chapter 1). They will remain

²³²Tahan baikunth jeh kirtan tera (GGS 749)

²³³Vadha hoa dunidaar gal sangal ghat chalaya.....(GGS 464)

²³⁴ Jab lag man baikunth ki aas, tab lag hoi nahin charan niwas (GGS p. 325)

²³⁵ The Hindu position is not consistent, as they also believe in the transmigration of the soul.

²³⁶ Jews also believe this .See Madrash chapter 7 verse 14.According to Sahih Muslim (page 6665-6669) the Prophet said, “There would be people among Muslims with as heavy sins as a mountain, but Allah would forgive them and He would place in their stead the Jews and the Christians ”

in hell for no more than 7000 years (Ihya 4-768). Prophet Muhammad will plead for them and deliver those that were God-fearing and leave the wrongdoers therein.“ But as for those who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut out for them, boiling fluid will be poured on their heads whereby that which is in their bellies, and the skins too, will be melted, and for them are hooked rods of iron.”(HQ 22:19-21) Time and again they will be beaten back into the inferno. “They will wear sandals of fire which will make their brains boil.” (SB. Riqaq 51)

According to *Ahadis* the faithful Muslims will assemble around Muhammad near a pool (*Hawz*) and then traverse a bridge (*Seraat-al-Mustaqeem*) which is suspended over the gulf of hell. This bridge is sharper than a sword and finer than a hair²³⁷. Those who enter heaven (*Jannat*)²³⁸ will live in beautiful gardens surrounded by rivers of milk and honey (HQ77: 41-44). They will have companionship with large-eyed women of exquisite beauty who are like pearls and sapphires untouched by man or jinn (HQ 78:33)²³⁹ and a sealed (HQ 83: 25) cup of wine overflowing (HQ78: 34). Whosoever drinks it will never thirst again. They will have gardens and springs to enjoy where plants are showered with rose-water rain and the mountains are made of camphor. Men of God (Prophets) will have two gardens each with silken carpets spread in them. There will be 72 varieties of food, no two of which, will be the same (Hakim ii-476)

There is a fruit in the garden of heaven, which if eaten, makes an individual immortal²⁴⁰. Even those living in the lowest part of heaven will have 80,000 servants and 72 wives. (Imam Ghazali)

“The Jews split into 71 sects: Only one will enter paradise (*Firdaus*) and 70 will enter hell. The Christians split into 72 sects, 71 will enter hell and one will enter paradise. My *umma* will split into 73 sects, one will enter paradise and 72 (700,000 Muslims only SB470)

²³⁷ Before Prophet Muhammad the Parsees called the bridge Chanyud.

²³⁸ According to Sahih Muslim (418) “only 70,000 persons of my Umma would enter paradise without rendering an account,” said the Prophet.

²³⁹ This is also found in the religious book Zind Avesta of the Parsis. Their religious preceptor was Zartushat (Known as Zarathustra) who had lived and died before Prophet Muhammad.

²⁴⁰ Hindus call this fruit Pakshjati, Parsees call it Humpa and the Muslims call it Tuba.

will enter hell.” Said the Prophet (Abu Dawd Kitab-Al-Sunnah Hadis 4572-73)²⁴¹

10.6.2 Hell (*Dozakh*) in Islam

Hell is divided into seven parts as follows²⁴²:

1. *Jahannam*: - for sinning Muslims.
2. *Nati*: - for Christians
3. *Azma*: - for Jews.
4. *Maeer sabi*: - for star-worshippers of Arabia
5. *Saqar*: - for majusis (fire worshippers)
6. *Hajeem*: - For idol-worshippers.
7. *Haavia*: - For Munafqeen (Whose fidelity towards Prophet Muhammad was doubtful).

In the darkness of *Haavia* the *Munafqeen* “will say unto those who believe: look on us that we may borrow from your light! It will be said, go back and seek for light! Then there will separate them a wall wherein is a gate, the inner side whereof containeth mercy, while the outer side thereof is toward the doom”(HQ 57:13)

Hell is a place for the profligate where they will abide for ages. There they will taste neither coolness nor drink except for boiling water full of pus (HQ 14:16-17) and suffer bitter cold. They will walk between two infernos on the thorns of sadan bush (SB. Adhan 129). They will go from Prophet to Prophet seeking help but no Prophet except Muhammad will help them. They shall eat from the tree of *Zaqqum* (a tree that grows from the base of hell and bears fruit like the head of a devil. The fruit is thorny and bitter and is without nourishment) (HQ 17:60,37:62,44:43 and 56:52).²⁴³

²⁴¹ “If two or three or four Muslims testify to somebody’s good character that somebody is admitted by Allah into paradise”(SB811 V.3 B.48) “No one will enter paradise but a Muslim and Allah may support this religion (i.e. Islam) even with a disobedient man(SB 297 V.4 B.52)

²⁴² For a fuller description of hell read Eschatologia.(135-63)

²⁴³ “ There is a tree in paradise (Which is so big and huge that) if a rider travels in its shade for one hundred years, he will not be able to cross it.”(SB474,403 V.6 B.60)

CHAPTER 11

Angels, Jinns²⁴⁴, Spirits, Miracles, Omens and Spells

11.1 Angels, Jinns and spirits: Sikh view

In God's infinite creation there are different planes of existence and a vast number (not capable of being counted but referred to in *Gurbani* as *kete*) of species and beings on this and other planes²⁴⁵. It would be futile and unwise to name or describe some to the exclusion of others.

In Sikhism, angels and jinns are seen in the different good or bad qualities which human beings show.

“Love of wealth, lust, wrath and self-conceit are the evils. These are the tools of the devil. On souls infatuated with these descends the club of the Death's Myrmidon.” (GGS p. 513)²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴Jinns are mentioned in the Holy Quran at many places (HQ 72:1). The Quran reads, “ We created the jinn from smokeless fire”(HQ55: 15). Accepting the existence of Jinns is, therefore, an integral part of Islam. Those who deny the jinn deny the Quran. According to Abu ad-Darda one jinn also visited the Prophet one morning in his prayers. According to *Ahadis* jinns are of three types (1) those who fly (ii) those who are like snakes and dogs and (iii) those based at one place but empowered to move about and travel. They visit at night but do not open a closed door (SB). All jinns can have children. They eat bone and dung with their left hand (SB). They cause illness among humans. A group of jinns in Medina became Muslims. Although they are not supposed to die, Khalid Ibn Wallid is said to have killed a jinn named Sheytan-al-Uzza.

²⁴⁵Reference: various stanzas in, and the underlying theme of Japu Ji. While giving clear indication regarding the revolving and moving “khand, mandal, brahmand” nature of the universe and regarding other planes of existence, the Guru also says that such planes, environments and life forms are beyond human vocabulary and numeracy. The number of “forms” waiting to do His bidding is numerous. It would be foolish and impossible indeed to try and describe all that is in God's creation.

²⁴⁶*Maya Moh paret hai kaam krodh ahankar.....* (GGS 513)

“If one is without the Lord’s loving worship and forgets the Master, then one is like an evil spirit.” (GGS p. 706)²⁴⁷

“Kabir, the houses in which saints are not served, nor is God contemplated are like cremation grounds and those who dwell therein are like evil spirits”. (GGS p. 1374)²⁴⁸

The above is the Sikh theological position. However, as in some other areas e.g. the caste system, treatment of women, and superstitious rituals and cult practices, the Sikhs lag behind the Guru’s teaching. The growing priesthood amongst the Sikhs - despite the fact that there is no ordained priestly class in Sikhism - and *sant* (saint) cults, continue to spread superstition and belief in jinns and spirits in order to exploit the more gullible Sikhs.

11.2 Angels, Jinns and spirits: Islamic view

Satan or *Shaitan* in Islam has been mentioned under “The Nature of Evil” as an anti-God entity. Some Islamic references are given below to show the nature of Islamic belief in angels and Jinns. (See the variant *jinni* in OED as “a spirit which can assume human or animal form and exercise supernatural influence over human beings.”)

Muslims believe that God created angels and Jinns before creating Adam whom he created from clay. He ordered Jinns to prostrate before Adam (HQ 38: 74-75) *Iblis* declined to do so and said, “You created me from fire but him you created from clay. I am better than he is ”(HQ 7: 12 and 15:32-33). “Get out from here”, said God, “My curse is on you till the day of Judgement” (HQ15: 34-35). *Iblis* requested God for reprieve, which was granted (HQ 7:15-15). “Because thou hath sent me astray, verily I shall lurk in ambush for them on thy right path. Then I shall come upon them from before and from behind and from their right hands and from their left hands and thou wilt not find most of them beholden (unto thee)”said *Iblis*. (HQ 7:16-17)

²⁴⁷Har bhagat bhav hinang Nanak Prabh bisrat te pret-teh (GGS 706)

²⁴⁸Kabir, jeh ghar sadh na sevyā Har ki seva nahe, te ghar marhat sarkhe bhoot vase tin mahe. (GGS 1374)

Thenceforth, *Iblis* started misguiding Adam and his children. Adam lived in *Al-Jannah* (paradise). He was alone so God created Hawaa and said, “Do not go to that tree”. *Iblis* tempted Adam and Hawaa and as soon as they went to the forbidden tree they became naked and were turned out of *Al-Jannah* to live on earth. Despite this transgression Adam is known to be the first Prophet of Islam.

“There is never a day wherein servants of God get up in the morning but are not visited by two angels” (SM 2205). Angels enter into the mother’s womb and write the destiny of the unborn child (SB 550)

“The Prophet had hardly laid down His arms after the battle of Khandaq when Jibrael appeared and told him to destroy the tribe of Quraiza”. (SM 4370)

11.3 Miracles and supernatural events: Sikh view

Miracles and supernatural events are germane to most religious beliefs. Human belief is that Prophets and saints perform miracles. The word miracle here is taken in its broadest sense as also including the granting of a wish e.g. giving sight to a blind person, a child to a childless couple, causing an earthquake or some other “natural” disaster, and so on. It is called *Karamat* in this broad sense and would include magical powers. The underlying teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, however, do not divide God’s Will (*Hukam*) into the natural and the supernatural Will. Furthermore no lesser being than God Himself, can alter the operation of that Will. A miracle is only a miracle so long as God’s Will is not understood by the human mind. What is a “miracle” today may be a normal event tomorrow when it is “understood”! The main concern of Sikh religion and the main purpose of Sikh life are to understand and abide by God’s Will. As Guru Nanak Dev points out, God’s miracles are happening all around us. The working of the earth system is a miracle of God.

Belief in miracles is not central to Sikhism. Indeed, it has been sidelined to such an extent that most Sikh scholars do not care to dwell at length on the subject. It is very clear that the Guru

condemned the performance of miracles thereby accepting their existence i.e. the possibility of mind's superiority over matter.²⁴⁹ Sainly people in tune with and within God's Will, may appear to "perform" miracles to the ordinary person, yet, they do not and cannot interfere with God's Will.

"Except for God's True Name I have no miraculous powers". (Varan Bhai Gurdas 1.43, quoting Guru Nanak's response to the Sidhas living in the Himalayas)²⁵⁰

"Says Nanak, what the Lord gives through His benevolence is a miracle." (GGS p. 474)²⁵¹

The True Guru is capable of changing the nature of a human being by putting him on the right path; that is a miracle.

"Without the True Guru, none attains the Name. It is only through the Guru that Name is received (i.e. oneness with the God Being achieved). Without the Name, in vain are all robes and dishes and contemptible are the austerities and contemptible are the miracles (i.e. the performance of miracles).....Nanak, through the Guru, the Lord's Name abides in the mind. This alone is the miraculous might and this the miracle." (GGS p. 650)²⁵²

Thus, performance of miracles is strongly condemned by the Guru. Bhai Nand Lal (poet laureate of Guru Gobind Singh) in his work "Tausif-o-sana" says that Guru Nanak's mission was to bring those who had lost their true path by indulging in miracles and superstitious cult practices, to the right path.

When looking at the Islamic view regarding miracles, let the reader bear in mind, that, like Islam, Sikh religious stories are also full of "miracles". Some accounts of historical events too rely on

²⁴⁹ *Pehra agan hivay ghar baadha, bhojan saar kraaee.....* (GGS p.147); further clarified by Bhai Gurdas:*Bastar pehro agan ke, baraf Himaalay mandar shaaee.....* (Bhai Gurdas Kabit 43).

²⁵⁰ *Bajhoh Saache Naam de hor kramaat asathai naahi* (Varan Bhai Gurdas 1.43)

²⁵¹ *Nanak sa kramaat Sahib tute jo milai* (GGS 474)

²⁵² *Bin Satgur kinay na paayo, gurmukh milay milai.....*(GGS p 650)

“miracles” to explain the amazing feats of the Khalsa, thereby belittling the true achievements and the great sacrifices made. Regrettably, some “priests” amongst the Sikhs are using these and many fictitious stories about the Gurus to spread ignorance and superstition, and to fleece the more gullible Sikhs. True Sikhism lies in the Guru’s word (*Guru Granth Sahib*) and not in stories concocted by vested interests.

11.3.1 Miracles and supernatural events: Islamic view

Muslims believe in the occurrence and performance of miracles. Fire did not burn Abraham and instead turned into flowers (HQ 21:69). Miracle saved Abraham’s son from being sacrificed (HQ 37: 101-107). Some other examples of miracles mentioned in the Quran and *Ahadis* are as follows. River Nile divided itself (HQ 26:63). Pharaoh’s armies drowned (HQ 26: 66). Jesus was born of a virgin (HQ 19:17-21) and could talk at birth (HQ 19:29-34, 3:46). Jesus made living birds out of clay, healed lepers, cured the blind and made the dead alive. Prophet Muhammad, through *Istisqa* prayer brought and then stopped rain in the valley of Qanat (SB55 V.2 B.13). The moon split into two parts (HQ 54: 1).²⁵³ A wolf spoke to the Prophet’s companions near Medina (SB 517 V.3 B.39) and the sun stopped in its course until Prophet Muhammad won a war (SB 353). Jona survived in the stomach of a fish (HQ 37:142). Moses’ staff turned into a snake and his hand became white (HQ 20:20-22)

Jibrael told Prophet Muhammad to throw a handful of dust at the invading army. He did so and the faces of the invaders became ugly. They ran helter skelter. (HQ 8: 17). The people known as Samud killed Salih’s camel. The latter brought an earthquake to punish them (HQ 7: 77-79) and stones fell on Prophet Lot. (HQ 11:81-82) Jibrael took out Prophet Muhammad’s heart, washed it and then replaced it. “Didn’t we open your heart?”(HQ 941,SB 429)²⁵⁴

²⁵³ The people of Mecca asked the prophet to show them a sign (miracle) so he showed them (the miracle) of the cleaving of the moon. The moon was split into two parts, one part remained over the mountain, and the other part went beyond the mountain. On that Allah’s Apostle said: Witness this miracle “(SB 38,89,388,390). This is mentioned as *Shat-al-Qamar* in the holy Quran.

²⁵⁴ Allah’s Apostle said, “While I was in Mecca ,the roof of my house was opened and Gabriel descended, opened my chest and washed it with *Zam zam* water (SB 345)

Some books (*See Mishkwat al-Masabih, Hayat-al-Yaqin, Ain-al-Hayat and Ahadis*) also mention miracles. For example Sahih Muslim and Mishkwat-al-Masabih (page 525) mention that trees and stones saluted the Prophet and followed his orders. Two trees provided shade to Prophet Muhammad wherever he went and “for him are angels ranged before and behind him”(HQ 13-11). In the battle of Hudaibiya 1400 Muslim soldiers were dying of thirst. The Prophet spat into a disused well and the water welled up to the brink. The combatants and the animals all quenched their thirst. (SM 4450) The Prophet said, “Mecca used to salute me before I became a Prophet and I recognise that even now” (SM 5654). *Kaaba* moved 60 miles to meet Rabia Basri.

During the battle of *Khandaq* Jabir b. Abdullah prepared food for the Prophet and invited Him as a guest. To his consternation the Prophet turned up with 1000 men. Prophet Muhammad threw some saliva into the pot. One person’s food became sufficient for the whole assembly (*Rauzat-u-Safa* page 467 also see SB 293,294 V.7 B.65). On another occasion when it was discovered that people were not readily accepting Islam an angel appeared and promised to bring together the two mountains of Mecca to chastise the people by crushing them between these mountains (SM 4425). “A small quantity of water was brought to Prophet Muhammad,” tells Anas, “sufficient for him alone to wash hands but when He placed his hands in it, water came spouting from his fingers.”(SM 5657 SB170)

11.4 Omens, soothsayers and spells etc: Sikh view

Total belief in One God, Who is without any rival entity and Whose Will (*hukam or razaa*) is paramount, rules out any possibility for superstition of any sort (*bharam*) in Sikhism. Fear of the unknown gives rise to superstition. Firm belief in God alone gives rise to the conviction that: “One whose Lord is all-powerful cannot be destroyed (harmed)” (GGS P.842)²⁵⁵“No evil wind (force) can touch one who has sought the protection of the Supreme Lord” (GGS P.819).²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵“*Jis da Sahib dadha hoi tis no maar na sakai koi*” (GGS 842)

²⁵⁶ *Tati vaao na lagae, Parbraham sarnai* (GGS 819)

“Good or bad omens trouble the person who remembers Him not. Death’s courier (fear of death) draws not near a person who is pleasing to the Lord.” (GGS P.401)²⁵⁷

Guru Gobind Singh’s injunction to the Sikhs (*Khalsa*) is to remain continuously immersed in the Lord’s Name, shun all rituals and never to put faith in omens, incantations and amulets. The Sikhs are strictly forbidden from visiting graves or soothsayers.

“Never even by mistake put faith in fasting, graves, mausoleums and Hindu *Maths*” (Guru Gobind Singh)²⁵⁸

11.4.1 Omens, soothsayers and spells etc: Islamic view

Prophet Muhammad disapproved *Kahins* (soothsayers) and fortune-tellers but he accepted the influence of an evil eye, which he said, is a fact (SB 827 V.7 B.72). He suggested a bath if affected by an evil eye (SM 5427). Once the angels told him that a spell cast by Labid bin A’sam, who had stolen the Prophet’s hair, had affected him, because Labid had knotted the Prophet’s hair and thrown them into a well. The Prophet had the hair brought back from the well and felt better. He said, “I seek refuge in the Lord of day break. From the evil of that which He created; from the evil of the darkness when it is intense, and from the evil of malignant witchcraft.”(SM 5442-5457 SB 490 and HQ 113:1-4).²⁵⁹

The Prophet believed in good omens. “Good omens please me” he said. (SM 5519).” “If bad luck is a fact, then it is in a horse, a woman or a house”(SM 5526 SB 110) The Prophet believed that when the jinns eavesdrop on God and snatch heavenly news, the angels send meteors after them (HQ72: 8-9).“Yawning is from the devil” (SM 7129,SB 509) and hence disapproved.

²⁵⁷ *Sagan apsagan tis ko lage jis cheet na away.....*(GGS 401)

²⁵⁸ *Gor Marhi Math bhool na maney* (Guru Gobind Singh)

²⁵⁹ Explaining witchcraft Muhammad Marmaduke writes in the footnote on page 455 of Glorious Quran as follows: “From the evil of blowers (feminine) upon knots, it having been a common form of witchcraft in Arabia for women to tie knots in a cord and blow upon them with an imprecation”

“He who eats seven Ajwa dates every morning will not beaffected by poison or magic” (SB 356 V.7 B.65).

CHAPTER 12

Initiation into Religion and Code of Conduct

Religious systems have prescribed rules about initiation into a religion and about what is permissible and what is not.

Although, they usually start as general principles, the tendency for such rules is to increase in number and detail and to become more set and formalised. Religious institutions, divisions and controversies grow as a result of their interpretation. This is true in the case of both, Islam and Sikhism. Only a very general idea of the nature of these rules and regulations is given below. The reader would wish to refer to the sources quoted for further study.

12.1 Initiation into Sikhism and Code of Conduct

“Sikh”²⁶⁰ means a person who professes the Sikh religion (Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925). The main-stream Sikh view is that a person who has total belief in One God (as defined in the basic precept, the *Mool Mantar* at the beginning of GGS) and none other, and follows the Guru, i.e. *Shabad Guru* (*Gurbani*, the teachings in Sri Guru Granth Sahib), and the Ten Sikh Guru personalities only, is a Sikh²⁶¹.

Men and women enjoy equal status in all aspects of Sikh life including full participation in religious rites. A Sikh is either born in a Sikh family or becomes a Sikh through the *sehajdhari* process (steady progress towards becoming a Sikh). The stress in Sikhism is on the mental and physical disciplines (*rehat*) and not on mere rituals or external appearance alone. Unshorn hair (*kesh*) and *dastar* (Sikh turban) have become representative of the Sikh identity in the

²⁶⁰ The word is derived from ancient Pali language where it means “God’s own people”

²⁶¹ Some Sikh sects, like the Namdharis, believe in a line of gurus after the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh.

world community. Sikhs kept unshorn hair from the days of Guru Nanak and there are references in GGS to the connotation of slavery behind shaving off hair and beards, which used to be a form of degrading punishment at one time.

At a certain point in his or her life, usually in the teens, a Sikh goes through the ceremony of taking *Amrit*²⁶² or *Khande di Pahul*. It is an initiation of the double-edged sword, at which he or she formally takes vows to follow the internal **and external** disciplines laid down by the Guru. The keeping of the five articles of faith becomes mandatory. These are the five K's or *kakars* as they start with the "k" sound i.e. *kesh* (unshorn hair), *kangha* (wooden comb to keep the hair tidy), *kirpan* (Sikh sword), *kashehra* (Sikh shorts), and *kara* (steel bangle).

Space would not allow a fuller discussion of the Sikh articles of **faith**. The faith is in the Guru's eternal wisdom. For a believing Sikh that is sufficient reason for keeping these articles of faith erroneously called "symbols." However, some reasons put forward by Sikh scholars follow: *Kesh* promote saintly qualities: there is also a traditional association of hair with a saintly, nature-loving disposition. *Kangha* symbolises cleanliness, keeps the hair tidy (unlike the matted hair of an ascetic who is a dropout from society and family life). *Kirpan* is the benevolent defender of the weak and destroyer of evil. *Kashehra* is agile cover for nakedness and also represents chastity, and *kara* around the wrist is a restraint and reminds the Sikh's bond with the Guru. It has been argued that only a Sikh can stand up unabashed in a civilised society in readiness to serve and to defend.

The Sikh code of conduct, by the Guru's injunction, is based on the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. The reader is referred to the Sikh *Rehat Maryada*²⁶³ for further information about the Sikh way of life and the Sikh ceremonies.

²⁶²“Water of immortality” symbolic of rekindling the human spirit with the divine light.

²⁶³ *Rehat Maryada* - A guide to the Sikh way of life” published by the Dharam Prachar Committee of the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar (November, 1978) is the English translation of the Sikh code approved by the SGPC, the Supreme Religious Parliament of Sikhs in August, 1936.

Sikh *rehat* (way of life) discussed under various headings (e.g. see under “Sin”) is based on truthful conduct which is the highest virtue in this life and the only means of striking a harmonious relationship with the Lord. From the Sikh identity, determined by the Sikh articles of faith prescribed in the *Rehat Maryada*, to every instruction about social and spiritual life of a Sikh, truthful conduct is the underlying theme.

The Guru’s challenge to a Sikh is “If you wish to play the game of (Divine) love, then place your head on the palm of your hand and come my way. In following my way be prepared to give your head (i.e. life) without hesitation. (GGS 1312)²⁶⁴

On the other hand, it would be fair to say that Sikhism is very much less prescriptive than Islam or indeed any other religion. Yet, in another sense, by the Guru’s injunction (very clearly given by Guru Gobind Singh), the whole Guru Granth Sahib is regarded as giving guidance on human conduct.

Sikhism certainly is not complacent regarding conduct and the warning is clear: that “this precious opportunity provided by human life will be wasted if it is squandered away in false egocentric attachment with materialism.” (GGS p. 12)²⁶⁵ The consequences of failing to achieve the main purpose of this life will be terrible. It will mean a return to the painful cycle of birth and death. Thus a Sikh is made personally responsible for his or her own conduct

Finally, the Guru says, “The physical and spiritual discipline (in accordance with the Sikh *rehat*) is dear to me and not the Sikh.” (Guru Gobind Singh)²⁶⁶

There are four major *kurehats* - major breaches of Sikh discipline - formally identified by Guru Gobind Singh when he established the Khalsa way of life. They are (1) removal of hair (2) eating meat prepared (i.e. ritually slaughtered animal) in the Muhammedan

²⁶⁴ *Je tao prem khelan ka chao, sir dhar tali gali mori aao* (Guru Nanak, GGS 1312)

²⁶⁵ *Bhai prapat manukh dehuria, Gobind milan ki eh teri baria* (GGS 12)

²⁶⁶ *Rehat piari mujh ko, Sikh piara nahe* (Guru Gobind Singh).

fashion (*Halal*)²⁶⁷ (3) adultery and (4) using tobacco and other intoxicants

If a Sikh commits any of these breaches of discipline, he becomes a *patit* (apostate) and has to repent and undergo *Amrit* initiation once again. (SGPC *Rehat Maryada*). Removal of any of the articles of faith (the 5 *kakars*) is a breach of the *rehat*. Lesser acts of omission and commission are punished through *tankhah* (community service).

12.2 Initiation into Islam and Code of Conduct

To accept Islam one has to pare nails, have a bath, remove hair from head, armpits and pubic region and then to make the following statement (*known as Shahadah*) orally

“*Ash hadu An la ilaha illal-Lahu wahdahu la shareekalahu wa Ash hadu Anna Muhammadan abduhu wa Rasuluhu*”²⁶⁸

“I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, who has no partner and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God”

After this the initiate is given an Islamic name which usually includes names or parts of names from Islamic and prophetic personalities. The Prophet said, "Name yourselves with my name (use my name) but do not name yourselves with my *Kunya* i.e. Abu-ul-Qasim.(SB 345)

According to the *Hadis* (SB 7 V.1 B.2) the novitiate has to abide by the following:

1. Repeat *Shadah* (as above)
2. Offer mandatory (congregational) prayers dutifully
3. Pay *Zakat* (Obligatory charity)
4. Perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca and
5. observe fast during the month of Ramadan.

²⁶⁷ “The Sikhs eat *Jhatka* meat, i.e. the flesh of a bird or animal that has been killed with one stroke of the blade and not the slow process favoured by the Muhammedans.” (SGPC *Rehat Maryada* reprinted 1978). Many Sikhs do not eat meat.

²⁶⁸ This is known as ‘*Kalima-e-Shahadat*’. There are six *Kalimas*. The others are ‘*Kalima –e-Tayyab*’, ‘*Kalima-e-Tumjeed*’, ‘*Kalima-e-Tawhid*’, ‘*Kalima-e-Istaghfar*’ and ‘*Kalima Radd-e-Kufr*’

No formal initiation is considered necessary in Islam. The convert has to put full faith in the Holy Quran and the sayings (*Ahadis*) of Prophet Muhammad. “None of you believes until his inclination is in accordance with what I have brought,” said the Prophet (*An Nawawi’s 40 Hadis*). A Muslim must obey the Prophet and follow his example every moment of his life (HQ 5:93,7:159, 33:21 etc).”And it becometh not a believing man or a believing woman , when Allah and His Messenger have decided an affair (for them) that they should (after that) claim any say in the affair”(HQ 33-36)

Seeking blessings for Prophet Muhammad is a duty. “The people asked: O Allah’s Apostle! How shall we (ask Allah to) send blessings on you? Allah’s Apostle replied: Say, O Allah, send your mercy on Muhammad and on his wives and on his offspring.” (SB 588,589)

Fitra: (1) Muslims believe in circumcision. The practice was prevalent among the Jews before the advent of Islam.²⁶⁹ It is a process in which the foreskin of the sex organ is removed. In some parts of Africa even women are circumcised²⁷⁰. Fitra also involves (2) Shaving pubes (3) Plucking the hair under the armpits (3) clipping the moustache.²⁷¹

Islamic code -*Sharia* and *Fiqh*

Sharia (literally it means ‘the straight path’) is Muslim law based on the Holy Quran, the *Sunnah* (examples from the life of the Prophet recorded in the *Ahadis*), the *Ijmah* (consensus), and *Qyaas* (analogy or reasoning on the basis of similar circumstances). “Whoever turns away from my *Sunnah*, has no relationship with me” (SM 3236)

²⁶⁹ God struck a covenant with Moses and told him to get all male descendants circumcised “to show there is a covenant between you and me” (The Holy Bible Genesis 17:12).A Muslim child is usually circumcised between the ages of 3 and 7.Circumcision is not mentioned in the Holy Quran but is considered obligatory before adulthood.

²⁷⁰ The women activists and the Ministry of Health in Egypt challenged female circumcision in the court as anti-Islam in early 1997 and called for a ban on it. The famous religious scholar Sheikh Yousef el-Badry opposed it and justified that Khitan (purification by circumcision) was an Islamic requirement and was absolutely necessary to guard against sexual diseases. He won the case .(Daily Telegraph 5.11.97)

²⁷¹ “Cut the moustaches short and leave the beard as it is”(SB 781 V.7 B,72)

Fiqah²⁷² is the science of Islamic law (jurisprudence). It consists of laws derived directly from the Holy Quran. *Fiqah* is divided into *Fard* or *Wajib* (duty), *Mandub* (recommended), *Mubah* (actions permitted by silence), *Makruh* (actions disapproved) and *Haram* (Actions punishable by law). An example is:

“As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands. It is the reward of their own deeds and exemplary punishment from Allah”. (HQ 5: 38)

12.3 Fasting: Sikh view

Apart from guidance regarding moderation in eating and drinking, Sikhism does not believe in any special spiritual benefit arising from fasts. The general instruction issued by Guru Gobind Singh to the Sikhs is “Eat less and sleep less”²⁷³

“Through fasting and penance the soul is not softened” (GGS p. 905)²⁷⁴

“One takes not food and tortures the body (However) without the Guru’s wisdom contentment is not achieved”. (GGS p. 905)²⁷⁵

“I practise not fasting nor do I observe the month of Ramzan. I serve Him alone, who will save me in the end.” (GGS p. 1136)²⁷⁶

“Observing fasts, reciting prayers and reading the Kalma shall not take you to the paradise. The Temple of Mecca is hidden within your mind, if only you knew it”(GGS p. 480)²⁷⁷

²⁷² Compiled by Abu Hanifa, Muhammad Ibn Idris (popularly known as Imam Shafi) and Malik ibn Anas. “To be a lawyer in Islam one must also be a great theologian and vice versa, for in the Islamic system religion and law are bound up with each other (*The family: its function and destiny Harper Bros. Page204*)

²⁷³ *Alap ahaar sulp si nindra* (Guru Gobind Singh)

²⁷⁴ *Varat tapan kar man nahi bheeje* (GGS 905)

²⁷⁵ *Ann na khahe, dehi dukh deejai. Bin Gur gian tript nahi thijai* (SGGS p 905)

²⁷⁶ *Varat na raho, na mah Ramdana. Tis sewi jo rakhay nidhana* (SGGS p 1136)

²⁷⁷ *Roza dhare nwaz guzare kalma bhist nw hoee* (GGS Page 480)

Az hzwrW kwbHw Xk idl ibhqr Asq, idl bdsq Awvr ik h`j-ey-Akbr
Asq (iek idl hzwrW kwibHAW nwloN cMgw hY, idl kwbU Aw igAw qW
v`fw h`j ho igAw smJo)

“You keep fasts to please Allah (the Compassionate) and yet slaughter animals to satisfy your palate. This is self-aggrandisement. What good is your word (compassion)?”²⁷⁸

12.3.1 Fasting: Islamic view

Fasting (*Saum*): -There are many kinds of fasts but the one in the month of Ramzan (HQ 2:186) is mandatory because, “When there comes the month of Ramzan, the gates of heaven are opened and the gates of hell are locked and the devils are chained” (SM 2361).²⁷⁹ Muslims take a meal (*sehri*) “a little before dawn for there is a blessing in taking meal at that time” (SM 2412) and then eat only after sunset. At sunset the fast must be broken immediately on seeing the moon because, “The people will prosper only as long as they hasten to break the fast” (SM 2417, SB 178). They have to avoid eating, drinking, using fragrance and involvement in sex during daytime. There are other fasts known as *nafl*. Although *nafls* earn merit they are not compulsory. *Saum* is a fast from dawn to dusk. “Fasting is prescribed for you even as it was prescribed for those before you that ye may ward off evil” (HQ 2:183-185).²⁸⁰

Fasting is not mandatory for those involved in *jihad* (SM 2486). “On the day of resurrection there will be a gate called *Ar-Raiyan* in paradise, through which only those who have fasted will be allowed to enter and when the last of them has entered it would be closed and no one would enter it afterwards.” (MM 2569 SB 120 V.3 B.31)

The Prophet forbade *Al-Wisal* (fasting continuously without breaking ones fast in the evening or eating before the following dawn). When somebody asked the Prophet, “But why do you

²⁷⁸ *Roza dhare manawe Allah suadat jee sanghare....* (GGS Page 483)

²⁷⁹ “Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah’s

rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven” (SB 38 V.1 B.2)

²⁸⁰ At the time of his residence in Mecca the Prophet used to observe fasts on Ashura 13, 14 and 15. (See *Fatuh-al-Ghaib*) After separating from the Jews of Medina, the whole months of Ramzan and Shaban were prescribed for fasts. Six days fast after Eid-al-fitr is considered very auspicious. Some Muslims believe that when Adam fell on the ground from heaven his skin was blackened. Fasts were observed to restore colour to his skin. At first the Jews observed a fast only on the day Moses was released by Pharaoh. Later many other fasts came into practice.

practise it yourself?” he replied, “I am not like you, for I am given food and drink (by Allah) during the night” (SB 182-183 V.3 B.31) As for women, the instruction is to watch their husbands. “None of you should fast on Friday unless he fasts a day before or after it”(SB 206 V.3 B.31)

CHAPTER 13

Family life, position of women and respect for parents

Married life is important in both religions and to some extent both religions mention complementary roles of men and women. However, there is no similarity regarding the status and treatment of women.

13.1 Family life: Sikh view

Sikhism strongly recommends the life of a householder. Married life is given the highest status as compared to any other way of life²⁸¹. There are numerous references in Guru Granth Sahib showing the importance of married life, e.g.:

“Such is the glory of the True Guru, that in the midst of children and wife, man obtains emancipation.” (GGS p. 661)²⁸²

“They call themselves continent, leave their home and hearth and know not the way of life.” (GGS p. 469)²⁸³

So far as Sikh teachings are concerned (despite the fact that practice is trailing far behind Sikh ideology), the status of women is equal to men in every respect. Some *Gurbani* quotations follow:

“A woman conceives (children) and a woman gives birth (to children), and it is with a woman that man is betrothed and married. With a woman, man contracts friendship and with a woman the system of propagation continues. When one’s wife dies, another is

²⁸¹Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha: *Gurmatt Martand* (P), Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar.

²⁸²*Satgur ki aisee wadyaee. Puttar kalattar wichay gatt pae* (GGS p. 661)

²⁸³*Jatti sadawai jugat na jaanay.....*(GGS p. 469).

sought, for it is through a woman that a man can restrain his passions. Why (then) call her inferior who gives birth to kings (great men). From a woman, a woman is born, without a woman there can be none. O Nanak, only the One True Lord is without a woman (i.e. does not depend on a woman to be brought into this world.)” (GGS p. 473)²⁸⁴

It needs to be remembered that the above quotation is from Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s hymns. Thus equal status for women is laid down in the founding principles of Sikh teachings.

There is an instruction that even within the family a woman must have equal rights because according to Sikhism “She is the most noble of all the family. She counsels and advises young and old. How blessed is that household, in which she has appeared. O servant Nanak, she should pass her time in perfect peace and comfort.”(GGS p.371)²⁸⁵ Outside the family the Sikhs are forbidden from having extra-marital or pre-marital sexual relationship. The standing instruction is “When you come across women not belonging to you or your relatives, treat them like your mothers, sisters or daughters” (Bhai Gurdas) Sikhism dis-approves keeping of *londis* (concubines). There are numerous examples where the Sikhs treated the women captured in war as their sisters and mothers.²⁸⁶

Bhai Gurdas, the Sikh scholar of repute, goes a step farther. He writes, “In social knowledge and pious qualities the better-half is the gateway to salvation” (Bhai Gurdas)²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁴ *Bhand jammian bhand nimmian....* (GGS 473)

²⁸⁵ *Sabh parware mahen sresht Mati Devi dever Jesht.....* (GGS p 371)

²⁸⁶ About Jassa Singh Ahluwalia we read, “once when Ahmed shah was returning to Kabul, he took with him a booty of two thousand women from the Punjab to serve as slave girls for his countrymen. He (Jassa Singh) fell on the Shah's troops one night and rescued the innocent creatures from the clutches of the hardy Afghans. He then liberally provided them with money and sent them all under proper escort to their respective homes” (Muhammad Latif ‘History of the Punjab’ page 316-17) *Qazi* Noor Muhammad who accompanied Ahmed Shah in 1764 offers a glowing tribute to the Sikhs in his *Jangnama* (page 172-75). Some of his lines read “They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, May she be a queen or a slave girl. Adultery also does not exist in these ‘dogs’. None of them is a thief (Quoted in advanced History of the Punjab University of Jammu page 462) In *Fatuhatnama-e-Samdhi* Ghulam Mohyudin writes that Banda Singh issued very strict code of conduct for his army. He laid down very severe punishments to discourage adultery.

²⁸⁷ *Lok ved Gun Gian wich ardh sariri mokh duari.....* (Bhai Gurdas)

Guru Ram Das Ji (the fourth Guru) in particular further developed the institution of marriage. He wrote four hymns for the Sikh marriage ceremony of Anand Karaj (these spiritual hymns include guidance for attaining bliss in married life).

During a Sikh marriage ceremony, the respective duties of a couple towards each other, towards their families, their society and their religion are clearly explained²⁸⁸. The ideal placed before a married couple is that they should become one in spirit:

“They are not wife and husband who only sit together; Rather are they wife and husband who have one spirit in two bodies” (GGS 788)²⁸⁹

Sikhism preaches complementary roles of men and women in all social spheres. However, women are not debarred from any activities carried out by men; nor are they restricted to any special dress. Indeed, although there is a traditional Panjabi dress for women (*salwar*, *kameez* and a light material head cloth), they may dress exactly like men and go to battle if need be. Some famous Sikh women have in fact led armies to battle. However the Sikh Gurus do preach moderation and avoidance of gaudy or sexy dress.

Except for the equal status and rights of men and women, Sikhism is less prescriptive about matters such as divorce and remarriage. The Sikh ideal is family life and a permanent and faithful relationship of mutual love and respect for life. Marriage is a physical as well as (even more so), a spiritual relationship for achieving bliss and equipoise in this life. Monogamy is the Sikh ideal. The marriage ceremony of *Anand Karaj* is considered a sacrament and not a civil contract, which can be torn up by mutual consent.

Following on from principles of complete gender equality in Sikhism, it is not surprising that Sikh thinking about matrimonial and family matters would be in line with responsible and humane modern thinking about marriage, divorce, arrangements following divorce, widow/widower marriage, second marriage following

²⁸⁸*Sikh Rehat Maryada*, SGPC, 1978 edition.

²⁸⁹*Dhan pir eh na aakhian.....* (GGS p. 788)

divorce and matters relating to custody of children. Remarriage of a widow or widower is permissible. Sikhs have no personal law; a husband or a wife can show reasons for divorce in civil courts and obtain it as the last resort. Sikh communities and families all participate in the preservation of the marriage, which is a bond between the families concerned as well as the couple.

Respect for parents and elders

Sikhism preaches respect for parents and elders.

“It is a sin to quarrel with them (your parents) who begot you and brought you up” (GGS p. 1200)²⁹⁰

“It is a sin to forget the goodness of parents and all the religious rituals done and charity given by those who abandon their parents are wasted.” (Varan Bhai Gurdas 37.12 & 13)²⁹¹

As in Islam (see below), however, respect for parents and duty towards parents would not stretch to deviation from the path of *Sikhi* or truthful conduct. Fearing for Bhagat Nama’s life due to religious persecution,²⁹² Nama’s mother cried and said, “Forget *Ram*, why not utter *Khuda*?” Nama refused to be persuaded to waver from the righteous path under threat (not that the different Names of the same One God made much difference for him) and replied, “I am not your son, nor are you my mother; even if my body suffers I shall continue to sing the Lord’s praises.” (GGS p. 1165).²⁹³ There are instances in Sikh tradition when Sikh children have defied their parents’ beliefs to embrace and stay with *Sikhi*²⁹⁴. They have gone so far as to disown their parents²⁹⁵

²⁹⁰ *Jin ke jane badiray tum ho..tin sion jhagreat paap.....* (GGS 1200)

²⁹¹ *Ma pio parhar parhe ved ,bhed na jane katha kahani* (Bhai Gurdas 37.12)

²⁹² It needs to be remembered that many Islamic saints (e.g. Pir Budhu Shah and Hazrat Mian Mir) opposed any form of religious oppression.

²⁹³ *Rudan karay Naamay ki Ma-aay.....* (GGS p. 1165)

²⁹⁴

For example see Bhai Sukha Singh’s early life in *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* by Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangu.

²⁹⁵ The case often quoted in Sikh history of a young Sikh captured with Banda Singh Bahadur, who dis-owned his mother when she pleaded that he had been led astray and that he was not a Sikh.

13.2 Family life: Islamic view

Islam supports married life. Prophet Muhammad²⁹⁶ was himself married and had children. He said, “Those among you who can support a wife should marry, for it restrains eyes from casting evil glances” (SM 3231).

Islam defines different rights and responsibilities of men and women. “Men are in charge of women because Allah hath made the one to excel the other and because they spend their property (for the support of women)” (HQ4: 34). Polygamy is permissible and allows up to four women (HQ 4:3)²⁹⁷. The Quran instructs “you will not be able to deal equally between (your) wives however much ye wish to do so but turn not altogether away (from one) leaving her as in suspense.” (HQ 4: 129). A woman is entitled to a dowry (*mehar*) and a lawful maintenance (*nafqah*) but the domination of a husband is paramount, “Your women are like a tilth for you (to cultivate), go unto your tilth as ye will” (HQ 2:223 SM 3363). “Had it not been for Eve, women would never have acted unfaithfully towards their husbands.” (SM 3471)²⁹⁸ However, “Thy women have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them” (HQ 2: 228). “As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them.” (HQ 4:34-35). “Serving a husband is obligatory since her husband is named her master in Allah’s Book and she is a captive with him as is shown in the *Sunnah* of Allah’s Messenger” (Adaab-uz-Zufaaf by Muhammad Nasir-ud-din page 47).

²⁹⁶ The Prophet is reported to have said, “There is no *rahibanya* (*asceticism*) in Islam. Marriage is my way and anyone who dislikes marriage does not belong to me.” In Islam marriage is therefore considered a divinely sanctioned institution. God said to Prophet Muhammad, “Do not have many wives” (HQ33: 52). Muslims are forbidden from having more than four wives (HQ4: 3). Sayyed Amir Ali, the great Muslim scholar, however, considered more than one marriage a violation of Islamic principles.

²⁹⁷ Four wives out of orphans and concubines. (Sura Al-Nisa 3-5).

²⁹⁸ Abu Said Al Khudri reports that he heard the prophet say, “The first rebellion of the children of Israel was brought about by women. “I was shown the hell fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful” (SB 28 V.1 B.2). If a woman loses two or three sons while she is still alive, she is protected by her sons from hell-fire (SB 101 V.1 B.3) and goes to paradise (SB340-42 V.2)

“ The adulterer shall not marry save an adulteress or an idolatress, and the adulteress none shall marry save an adulterer or an idolater..... And those who accuse honourable women but bring not four witnesses, scourge them (with) eighty stripes and never (afterward) accept their testimony.” (HQ24: 3-4)

“ As for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you against them. And if they testify (to the truth of the allegation), then confine them to the houses until death take them or (until) Allah appoint for them a way (through the new legislation)”(HQ 4:15)

A father can marry his adopted son's wife. Prophet Muhammad married his adopted son Zaid's wife Zainab. “Allah has established this with the Prophet and there is no objection in this.”²⁹⁹ “We joined her in marriage to thee, in order that in future there may be no difficulty to the believers in the matter of marriage with the wives of their adopted sons” (SM 3330-3332). “Marry the loving and the fertile women, for I will compete with other Prophets with the number of my followers on the day of Qiyamat” (Abu Dawd, An-Nassai and other *ahadis*). Shia Muslims believe that the Prophet permitted *Nikah-Al-mutah* (a marriage where a wife is hired for a certain number of days with money, gifts or *ujrat* and then the couple separate).³⁰⁰ They quote Sahih Muslim 3234 in support of their claim. Jabir reports in Sahih Muslim, “We contracted *mutah* giving a handful of dates and flowers as dowry” (SM 3249)³⁰¹. Abdullah reports that Prophet Muhammad “allowed us to marry a woman temporarily by giving her even a garment.” (SB 51,130 and 139 V.6 B.60)

²⁹⁹ “The Prophet was commanded to marry her in order, by his example, to disown the superstitious custom of the pagan Arabs, in such matters of treating their adopted sons as their real sons, which was against the laws of God” (The Glorious Quran Page 300)

³⁰⁰ “And there is no sin for you in what you do by mutual agreement after the duty (hath been done)” HQ 4:24

³⁰¹ *Mutah* is still practised in Persia and is legal. The period of *Mutah* lasts for three years, three months, three weeks or three days. *Caliph* Umar had abolished *mutah* for Sunnis by law.

“No woman should observe fast when her spouse is present in the house but with his permission”. (SM 2238) A woman’s testimony (*Shahadah*) has half the weight of a man’s (HQ 2: 282, 4:177).³⁰² When inheritance is to be shared “A male is equal to the portion of two females.”(SM 3933 HQ4: 177) A man can divorce his wife by simply saying “*Talaaq, talaaq, talaaq*” three times (HQ 2:229-230, SM 3491-93).³⁰³ *Talaaq* literally means, “undoing the knot”. A man cannot marry the same woman twice until she has married another man and divorced him (*Ihya* 2:230). “The proportion of rights and powers between male and female, as laid down by Islam, naturally demands that out of the two parties only the former should be entitled to pronounce divorce” (Maulana Moududi quoted in CIS page 110)

“Islam allows the conversion of female slaves into concubines with whom sexual relations are legitimate without the necessity of marriage. Once they have been allotted to their masters they become their property” (*Maulana Moududi quoted in CIS page 112 Also see HQ 4-3*) (SM 3432-34)”,³⁰⁴

“And all married women (are forbidden unto you) save those (captives) whom your right hand possesses. It is a decree of Allah for you” (HQ 4:24)

“Force not your slave girls to whoredom that ye may seek enjoyment of the life of the world, if they would preserve their chastity. And if one forces them, then Allah, after their compulsion, is All-forgiving, All-compassionate ” HQ 24:33³⁰⁵

³⁰² Because of the deficiency of a woman’s mind (SB 826 V.3 B.48) and habit of betrayal (SB 547 and 611) her witness is half that of a man.

³⁰³ One of the Khalifas is said to have divorced 100 wives even though he died young. He is known as ‘the great divorcer’ (History of the Punjab. Punjabi University Page 34) According to W. Muir, wives could also be gifted away (See Life of Muhammad Vol. II page 272-73). A wife can be transferred to another person (SB 264) For divorce read HQ 2-229, 33:49

³⁰⁴ The Prophet’s wife Safia (wife of Kinana) was a captive at the battle of Khaibar. So were Rihana and Juwariya (SM 4292 Also see Sirat Rasul Allah pages 493 and 517)

³⁰⁵ “ O Allah’s Apostle! We get female captives as our share of the booty, what is your opinion about coitus interruptus? Asked Said Al Khudri. The Prophet said, “ Do you really do that? It is better for you not to do it. No soul that which Allah has destined to exist but will surely come into existence” (SB32,135,718 V.3 B46)

Islamic dress for women

There is no mention of any restriction on what men wear. *Burqa* or *Hijab* is a contraption used by the Muslim women to keep their bodies covered except for the eyes (HQ 33:59, 24:31). This was prescribed by the Prophet. These restrictions, however, do not apply to old women (HQ 24: 60-61).³⁰⁶ *Sharia* requires women to dress up with clothes meeting the following criteria (*Adaab-uz-Zufaaf* page30).

1. The whole body must be covered except for the oval of the face and the two hands.
2. The material of the cloth must not be decorative.
3. The material must be thick enough to be opaque.
4. The dress must be loose enough as not to make clear the shape of the body.
5. A woman must never wear perfume in public.
6. The dress must not resemble the dress worn by men.
7. The dress must not resemble that worn by disbelieving women.
8. The dress must not be ostentatious.

Treatment of parents and elders: Islamic view

About the respect of parents the Prophet asked ‘ who among the people is most deserving of good treatment?’ and then answered, “Your mother, again your mother, again your mother. Then your father, then your nearest relatives according to the order of nearness”. (SM 6181)“O ye who believe! Choose not your fathers nor your brethren for friends if they take pleasure in disbelief rather than faith. Whoso of you taketh them for friends, such are wrong doers.” (HQ 9:23)

Where Muslim theology and social morality conflict, the

³⁰⁶ Turkey has abolished *Burqa* altogether but Arabia, Persia and Afghanistan enforce it strictly.

former must prevail. For example Allah ordered Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas not to obey his parents if they believed in polytheism. "We have enjoined on man kindness to parents, but if they strive to make thee join with Me that of which thou has no knowledge, then obey them not." (HQ 29:8)

CHAPTER 14

Some further Examples of Dissimilarities

This publication does not cover many modern topics, which both religions are addressing by interpreting their respective ideologies. Some topics mentioned below give an indication of this process and the extent to which there is any scope for adaptation of respective ideologies to modern issues. Some repetition in this Chapter cannot be avoided in order to bring out the basic differences in the two ideologies.

1. The law of blasphemy and the law of apostasy are not stated as such in the holy Quran or the *Ahadis*. They were the responses of the Muslim rulers to the challenges of their times based on their interpretations. Later they became a tradition that is being followed and approved even now.

“Lo! He who hath given thee The Quran for a law....” (HQ29: 58)

There is no such law in Sikhism.

2. Slavery is permitted in Islam (HQ 4:3). Bilal was Prophet Muhammad’s slave³⁰⁷ and the Prophet’s cousin Zubair (son of Abu Bakar) had 1000 slaves.” A Muslim, who emancipates a Muslim slave, Allah saves every limb of his from fire for every limb of the slave, even his private parts for him” (SM 3604 SB 693V.3 B.46)). Islam does not condemn slavery as undesirable but the manumission of slaves is considered a pious act and is counted among good

³⁰⁷ He was an Abyssinian slave of Umayya b. Khalaf of Mecca. He was purchased from him by Abu Bakar and transferred to the Prophet. According to Muhammad’s biographer Mirkhond, the Prophet had 59 slaves and 38 servants (Rauzat-us-Safaa). Slaves could be gifted away, sold, hired, mortgaged or loaned. Female slaves could be made into concubines (HQ 4:24, 23:6)

deeds.³⁰⁸ Manumission of slaves at the time of an eclipse is all the more meritorious. (SB 163 V.2B.17)

Slavery is not condoned in Sikhism in any form.

3. Islam does not approve music and dancing. Painting of animate objects and pictorial reproduction of human beings are prohibited.³⁰⁹ “Whoever makes a picture will be punished by Allah till he puts life in it”(SB428 V.3 B.34)

Music is *haram* (forbidden) in Islam.³¹⁰ “As for poets, the erring follow them. Hast thou not seen how they stray in every valley.”(HQ 26:224-225)³¹¹

“The question of arts belongs to the realm of social morality. Anything forbidden by *Sharia* is not proper for an Islamic Society. Among banned items are photography, music, sculpture and dancing etc. cinematography is permissible, since it does not produce the human picture, which is banned in Islam, but only an image” (CIS Page 113)

³⁰⁸ If a slave girl commits adultery she should be lashed. If she does it thrice then she should be sold even for a hair rope.(SB 362,435,731 V.3 B.46)

³⁰⁹ When the Prophet's wife Aisha used curtains with pictures, the Prophet said, “Change them. The most grievous torment from Allah on the day of resurrection would be for those who imitate Allah through His Creation. On that day Allah would ask them to breathe soul into what they created” (SM 5261-68).Some Muslims believe that even photography and sculpture are banned. (CIS Page 113) Some sections of Muslims also believe that lottery and insurance are forbidden.

³¹⁰ Aurangzeb, the Muslim Emperor of Delhi banned music in 1670.The musicians of Delhi made an effigy of music and demonstrated. Aurangzeb is reported to have said, “Bury it deep somewhere so that it does not rise again.” He also had many paintings defaced or whitewashed .His great great grandfather Humayun had studied music and poetry in Persia and had brought with him most famous painters Mir Sayya Ali and Abdu Samad who had founded Mughal Painting in India. Akbar also patronised painting and poetry. He said, “It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognising God.” Many Muslims have been great musicians. Amir Khusro is reputed to have invented the Sitar.Again it was he who improved upon the ‘Dholki’ converting it into two small drums played by placing them vertically up (known as Joree ज़ोरी) Muslim Derveshes, particularly followers of Maulana Rumi, love music and dancing.

³¹¹ The denunciation of poets in Sura *Ash-Shuara* is explained by Muhammad Marmaduke as follows:-“The difference between poets and Prophet is tersely pointed out; poets being those who say what they do not mean while a Prophet always practises what he preaches.”(The Glorious Quran page 264)

Sikh scripture (*Gurbani*) is written in poetry and is based on traditional and popular music. Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V) and Guru Nanak Dev were great musicians of their times. Therefore, there is no restriction on religious singing provided it enhances meditation. Culturally, there are no restrictions on singing dancing and painting provided these improve the quality of life. Sikhism preaches moderation and control of mind over emotions. Dancing in prayer or as a form of prayer (as among some Hindu sects or Muslim Sufi dervishes) is forbidden.

Guru Nanak's *Bara Maha Tukhari* and *Kirtan Sohila* paint excellent word pictures of beauty in nature. Floral and bird motifs are painted on the walls in Harmandir (Amritsar).

4. Islam dis-approves going near a leper (SM 5541).

Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V) had started a leper colony in Taran Taaran and personally used to clean their wounds.

5. Interest from the Bank (*ribah*) or from colleagues is banned in Islam. "Allah hath blighted usury and made almsgiving fruitful"(HQ 2:276)

There is no such restriction in Sikhism.

6. "Four are the vicious beasts: kite, cow, rat and a dog.³¹² They should be killed". (SM2717) Killing of a cat is forbidden (SM 5570-5576 SB 535) but salamanders must be killed (SB 525-526). Snakes (*Abtar*) must be killed because they destroy eyesight and bring about abortion but *Al-Awamir* (snakes living in houses) should not be killed. (SB 518, 527) There is a blessing in the foreheads of horses (SB 102 V4 B52).

Wanton killing of any creature is not approved in Sikhism. All life is sacred but no one animal is considered more "sacred" than another. However, Sikhism accepts the evolution of life and that humankind

³¹² "Whoever keeps a dog, one qirat of the reward of his good deeds is deducted daily, unless the dog is used for guarding a farm"(SB 541,542, 510,515 V3 B39)

is at the top of the evolution. The duty of humankind towards other life forms arises from this position of responsibility. (The study of *Gurbani* guidance regarding the Eco-system and other pressing modern issues is continuing.)

7. Good dreams (*Al ruya*) come from Allah but bad dreams (*Hulm*) come from *Satan* (SM 5613). If one had a bad dream one should spit thrice on the left side and not disclose the dream to anyone. (SM 5615, SB 513 V.4 B.54)

Sikhism puts no faith in dreams good or bad. According to Sikhism good or bad thoughts (*sankalp or vikalp*) or the sub-conscious dreams are the result of a wandering mind. The aim of *Gurmatt* (The Guru's path) is to achieve a state of tranquility through meditation on the Guru's word.

8. The Prophet instructed Abdullah b. Amar b. As not to wear saffron clothes. (SM Vol. 3 SB 737-38 V.7 B.72) "Do not wear silk, for one who wears it in this world will not wear it in the next" (SM 5150 SB 11, 317 and 778).

No colour or texture is considered bad or evil in Sikhism. In general Sikhism dis-approves gaudy clothes that whip up carnal desires but puts no restrictions on the quality or colour of the fabric

9. In the Holy Quran humans are shown communicating with birds and insects. A crow communicates with Tabil (HQ5: 31), birds take revenge on humans (HQ105: 1-4) and Prophet Abraham conversed with *Azrael*, (the angel of death) and Solomon (965 B.C) spoke to birds, ants and Jinns (HQ 27:15-19). The bird hoopoe brought news from the Queen of Sheba (HQ 27:22). In Sura *Al-fil* we read that when Abraha, the ruler of Yemen invaded Mecca, "flying creatures pelted him with stones of baked clay" (HQ105: 3,4)

The Sikhs have no such beliefs.

10. Adultery³¹³ and fornication are punishable in Islam but not if committed with women captured in war (SM 3234). A Muslim can also beat his wife (SM, Trimidhi and HQ 4:34).

Sikhism forbids adultery or beating of women in any situation. "Like the companionship of a poisonous snake is the desire of another's woman"(GGS P.403)³¹⁴. Ill treatment of women captured in war is strictly forbidden. This is what we read about Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala, "It was disorder, anarchy and confusion in Punjab, they moved from Malwa to Majha. Just before settling at Attari and the process of establishing their control they came across a helpless Muhammadan bride of the nearby Amir of Sarai Salamat Khan. The manner in which they returned her to the Amir became a legend and people still give example of their noble and moral character"³¹⁵

11. "One who chooses to follow the code revealed by God becomes a Muslim and one who refuses to follow it becomes a *Kafir*."(*The Religion of Islam by Khurshid Ahmed page 4*). "Believers are God's party but un-believers are Devil's party"(HQ4: 76). "Allah (Himself) is an enemy to the disbelievers" (HQ 2:15, 90,98). "Accursed, they will be seized wherever found and slain with a (fierce) slaughter (HQ 33:61).

The nearest word to *kafir* in Sikhism is *sakat*. It is borrowed from Hindu terminology where it is used for the worshipper of gods and

³¹³ Both religions disapprove adultery. Islam stipulates death by stoning for *Ar-Rajam* (SB 79) but Sikhism does not permit killing for any offence. It aims at changing the person's mind and thinking.

³¹⁴ "Jaisa sang bisar ka hai ray taiso hi ih pargrah....." (GGS P. 403)

³¹⁵ Ranjit Singh's Khalsa Raj and Attariwala Sardars,' National Book Depot Delhi 1944 Edition page 14.

"In November 1763 the Sikhs fell upon Jahan Khan, the commander of Ahmed Shah Abdali and defeated him. He fled to Sialkot and later to Peshawar. His whole family fell into the hands of the Sikhs but they were conducted to Jammu without molestation and were well looked after." (Advanced History of the Punjab. G.S.Chhabra. University of Jammu page 244) "The same year Usman Khan, the chief of Kasur abducted a beautiful Brahman woman. The Sikhs fell upon him and the woman was rescued and restored to her husband by Tarna Dal of the Sikhs." (Ibid p. 447) "They seldom resorted to cold-blooded murders even of their enemies and respected the chastity of women as their faith and honour" (*A History of the Sikhs* Gupta p. 286)

goddesses. Sakats involve in open unrestricted sex and intoxicants. In *Gurbani* it is also used for those who do not believe in the existence of God. Unlike Islam, Sikhism does not order killing of such persons but does advise to avoid their company.³¹⁶ “Shun the company of *sakat*, keep him at an arm’s length”(GGS p. 1371).³¹⁷

12. According to Islam association of Muslims with non-Muslims is not desirable. “Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers” (HQ 3:28,118.60:13,4:140)

The Sikhs are advised to avoid the company (*sangat*) of evil people who intentionally set out to mislead and take one away from the path of righteous living. Otherwise they are expected to mix with everybody irrespective of caste, creed, country or way of life and to respect all religions.

13. The tribes of Uraina and Ukl had their hands and legs cut off, their eyes gouged out and no water was given to them. They died a slow and painful death. (SB 577)

Whatever the extent of enmity, Sikhism does not sanction such treatment. Guru Gobind Singh blessed Bhai Kanhaya when the latter offered water and assistance to the fallen enemy in the battlefield. The Guru also instructed him to treat the wounds of the enemies from then onwards.

“The True Guru has no anger or vengeance and preaches the same. He looks upon son and enemy alike. He helps in removing faults and mistakes and thus purifies the human body”(GGS 960)³¹⁸

14. “One should not pray (a) When the sun is rising (b) When the sun is setting, (c) When the sun is at its Zenith, (d) After Asr prayer till the sun sets (e) After Fajr prayer till the sun rises” (The Muslim Prayer Book by B.A. Rafiq page 28). The reason is that the sun rises

³¹⁶ Killing of Kafirs is mentioned many times in the Holy Quran (see sura Tauba 1:5, Sura Tehrim and Sura Anfal) “Slay them wherever you find them”(HQ2: 191). In his book ‘Understanding Islam Maulana Moududi writes ‘where there’s no Imam, there is no Islam. Where there’s no Islam, there is Kufr’ (Page 20). *Kafirs* will burn in fire for ever (HQ3:117)

³¹⁷ *Kabir sakat sang na keechae doorah jaeay bhag*” (GGS Page 1371)

³¹⁸ “Satgur nirvair puttār satta samānāy aḡan kaat karay sudh deha.”(GGS P.960)

between the two sides of the head of the Devil (or Satan) (SB 494 V.4 B.54)

There is no such restriction in Sikhism.

15. “O Prophet tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (HQ 34:59) “and stay in houses. Bedizen not yourselves with the bedizement of the time of ignorance”(HQ 33:33)”

Sikhism expects modesty in wearing clothes but prohibits a veil. “Stay, stay O daughter-in-law do not cover your face with a veil. In the end a veil shall not bring you even half a cowry-shell (of credit)” (GGS P.484)³¹⁹

16. According to the law of *Qisas* Islam sanctions blood money (*Ad-Diyat*) for murders and a ransom for persons captured in war. (SB 25-27 V.6 B.60)“And there is life for you in retaliation.” (HQ2: 179)

There are no such instructions for the Sikhs. It is ordained by Guru Gobind Singh that the Sikhs should take up arms only when all other means have been exhausted.

17. “The power of Abu Lahab will perish, and he will perish. His wealth and gains will not exempt him. He will be plunged in flaming fire, and his wife, the wood-carrier, will have upon her neck a halter of palm-fibre”(HQ 111:1-5)³²⁰ “O Allah! Curse Lihtan, Ril Zakwan, Usaya, for they disobeyed God and the Prophet”(SM 1428). “O Allah be hard on the tribe of Mudhar and send (famine) years on them”(SB 120,121 V.2 B.17)

The Sikh Gurus suffered tortures and executions but did not utter any curse. Cursing is forbidden in Sikhism “Do not curse anyone. This is what your studies teach you” (GGS p. 473)³²¹

³¹⁹ “*Raho raho re bavaria Ghungat jin kadhay.....*” (GGS p. 484)

³²⁰ Lahab’s real name was Abd-ul-Uzza. He was denounced as Abd-ul-Lahab (father of flame). Prophet’s daughters Umm Kalsum and Ruqiya were married to Abu Lahab’s sons who divorced them at their father’s instruction.

³²¹ *Manda kisay na akheay parh akhar eho buhjeay* (GGS p. 473)

18. Islam recognises Adam, Noah, Abraham, Dawd, Moses, Jesus, Suleman, Yousouf, Luqman and some other preceptors as Prophets. It also gives credence to most of the Christian and Jewish stories.

The Sikhs are instructed to put faith in no one except their Holy Book *Guru Granth Sahib*.

19. Islam considers outward rituals like *Wuzu*, *Ghusal*, *Tayamum*, *Fitra*, *tathir*, *Miswak*, *Istinsha* and, *Istinja* etc spiritually very meritorious and expects the devotees to perform them in specially recommended ways. (HQ5: 6) For example in *Wuzu* hands have to be washed from up downwards (right arm first) thrice, mouth to be rinsed thrice, nose to be cleared thrice, then head to be washed, then feet (right first) to be washed up to ankles thrice strictly in that order.³²² He who follows this procedure in *Wuzu* all his past sins would be expiated. (SM436)³²³ Shaving and wearing of shoes must start from the right.

Sikhism considers cleanliness next to Godliness but attaches no spiritual merit to cleanliness of the body alone. Without inner purification higher ethical life is not possible “Cleanliness is not attained simply by washing the body it comes only when the Lord is enshrined in the mind.”³²⁴ Morning bath for the Sikhs is compulsory. They wash themselves clean before all prayers. However sins are not expected to be forgiven with cleanliness alone. Right and left have no merit for the Sikhs.

20. “No one would attain salvation purely because of his deeds” (SM6760) “None would be able to go into paradise because of his deeds alone” (SM 6770). For salvation intercession of Prophet Muhammad is absolutely necessary.

³²² “The Prophet used to like to start from the right side wearing shoes, combing his hair and cleaning or washing himself and on doing anything else”(SB 155,169,418 V.1 B.4)

³²³ If a utensil is licked by a dog, it should be washed seven times and rubbed with earth the eighth time. (SM 551) “If a housefly falls in the drink of anyone of you, he should dip it (in the drink) for one of its wings has a disease and the other has a cure for the disease” (SB 537 V.4 B.54)

³²⁴ *Suche eh na akheay behan je pinda dhoey.....* (Asa di var GGS p. 472)

Sikhism lays emphasis on deeds. It is only through pious deeds and prayers that God's Grace can be expected. The Guru is a guide and will not intercede for anybody.

"The Central idea of *Gursikhi* is that the Guru instructs and the *Gursikh* follows" (by studying and understanding the Guru's word). (GGS p. 28 and 465)³²⁵

On the seventh day after birth a Muslim child is shaved and given a name. This Ceremony is called *aqiqa*. On this occasion usually one sheep or goat is sacrificed if the child is a girl and two animals are killed if the child is a boy (SB 380 V.7B.66). Other birth ceremonies vary from one Muslim country to another.

A Sikh child is given a name when it is convenient for the family to visit a local Gurdwara. The Holy Guru Granth Sahib is opened at random and a hymn is read out aloud. The first letter of the hymn is used by the family to name the child. Male and female names differ only in that the male name ends with '*Singh*' and the female name ends with '*Kaur*'. On this occasion usually hymns are sung and prayers are offered for the grant of knowledge, meditation on the God's Name and a desire to serve others, to the child.

22. In Islam, a mother must suckle her child for two years (HQ 31-14)³²⁶

There is no such requirement in Sikhism.

23. In Islam a bridegroom is supposed to offer gifts in cash or kind (*Mehar*) to his bride (HQ4: 5). These gifts are supposed to be returned after *Talaq*.

There is no such requirement in Sikhism.

It is not considered proper to give *Zakat* in the form of clothes or any other article other than food. It is also not permissible to delay

³²⁵ *Gursikhi da karam eh gur farmaey Gursikh karna* (GGS p.28) "*Sikhi sikhia Gur vichar* (GGS P.465)

³²⁶ Problem arises when a woman is divorced before two years. Muslim scholars quote Sura 65-13 to decide that a Muslim woman must suckle her child even if divorced.

the giving of *Zakat* later than the *Eid* prayers except for some valid reasons. (See leaflet No.11 'A brief note on fasting & Zakat al Fitr' published by IPCI 481 Coventry Road Birmingham B10 OJS)

Sikhism expects its followers to offer anything on the spot (food, clothes, money, shoes, medicines or toys etc) that is needed and not to wait for any auspicious day or time. In offering help a Sikh is not permitted to consider the recipient's caste, creed, colour or country of origin.

25. The Muslim *Imam* has the authority to issue a *Fatwa* of death against any one as was done by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran against Salman Rushdie.

In Sikhism, the maximum punishment, the Jathedar of Akal Takhat in consultation with other four Jathedars can inflict, is excommunication.

26. A Muslim cannot marry two sisters. "And (it is forbidden unto you) that ye should have two sisters together, except what hath already happened (of that nature) in the past." (HQ 4:230)

There is no such restriction in Sikhism, although, polygamy is discouraged by the Sikh Rehat Maryada (SGPC, reprint 1978).

27. Prophet Muhammad preferred always to travel only on a Thursday, which is considered auspicious. (SB 199 V.4.B.52) "The year is of twelve months out of which four months (Dhul Qa'da, Dhul Hijja, Muharrum and Rajab) are sacred." (SB 419 V4 B54)

In Sikhism no day or month is considered more auspicious than the others are. "The same moon rises, the same stars, the same sun shines in the sky, the earth remains the same and the same wind blows. How can it be then that some times are sacred and the others not?" ³²⁷ (GGS P.902)

28. According to the *Ahadis* Prophet Muhammad said, Only the shepherds can become Prophets. "Allah did not send any Prophet

³²⁷ *Soi Chand charay say taray soi diniaar chamak rahay.....*" (GGS p.902)

but shepherded sheep”(SB 463 V.3 B.36 and SB 364 V.7 B.65)

The Sikhs have no such belief.

29. According to *Ahadis* “Five are martyrs: one who dies of plague, one who dies of an abdominal disease, one who dies of drowning, one who is buried alive (and) dies and one who is killed in Allah’s cause.”(SB82, 624)

“ Whoever is killed while protecting his property is a martyr” (SB 660 V3)

According to Sikhism a martyr is somebody who dies for a noble cause.

“It is the privilege of the brave men to die for an approved cause”(GGS p.579) “He alone is the hero who dies for the cause of the downtrodden. He will accept being cut to pieces but will not abandon his ideal”³²⁸ (GGS P.1105)

30. According to Islam “ Never will succeed such a nation as makes a woman their ruler” (SB 219 V.9 B.88). “No lady should travel on a journey of two days except with her husband or a Dhi-Mahram”(SB 215 V3 B31)

Sikhism does not put any restriction on women leading men or travelling alone.

31. *Walima* (wedding feast) is compulsory even if one sheep is sacrificed (SB264 V.3.B.34). The Prophet told Abd-ur-Rehman that he must offer a *Walima*. He who refuses invitation (to a banquet) disobeys Allah and His Apostle (SB 106,108 V.7 B.62)

Sikhism does not consider any banquet or attendance at a banquet compulsory.

32. “He who buys foodstuff should not sell it till he has received it”(SB 343 V.3 B.34). As for exchange of money, “If it is from hand to hand there is no harm in it, otherwise it is not permissible.” (SB

³²⁸ *Sura so pechaneye jo laray deen kay het.....* (GGS P.1105)

276 V3 B34)

There is no such restriction in Sikhism.

33. “The Hell-fire complained to its Lord saying O my Lord my different parts eat up each other. So He allowed it to take two breaths, one in the winter and the other in summer, and this is the reason for the severe heat and the bitter cold you find (in weather).” (SB 482)

The Sikh view is “The seconds, minutes, hours, days, weekdays, months and seasons all originate from one and the same sun. O Nanak the Creator manifests Himself in various guises”(GGS P.357)³²⁹

“The twelve months, the seasons, the weeks, the hours, the minutes and seconds are all sublime when the True lord is enshrined in the heart with ease”(GGS1109)³³⁰

34. At the time of Muslim prayer many Muslims consider a Mussalah (prayer mat) absolutely necessary.

The Sikhs do not have requirement like this. Any clean place can be used for a prayer.

“Let Truth be your prayer, and faith your prayer mat (*Mussallah*). Subdue your desires and overcome your hopes.” (GGS p.1083)³³¹

³²⁹ Wisuay chasian Gharian pehra thiti vari mah hoa....(GGS P.357)

³³⁰ “Be das mah ruti Thiti var bhalay ghari murat pal sachay sehjay aaye milay” (GGS p.1109)

³³¹ “Sach niwaj yakeen mussalah.....”(GGS p. 1083)

ANNEX 1

History of Sikhism

1.1 Background

In the late 15th and early 16th Centuries CE, when Guru Nanak introduced a revolutionary new ideology for the new age, the ordinary people of India were labouring under the yoke of two types of oppression. On the one hand there was the religious and social oppression by the Brahmanic and Islamic priestly classes and on the other was the oppression of the contemporary rulers. The Lodhi³³² Emperor's Central control from Delhi was weak and people regarded their local rulers as supreme. Punjab, the land of five rivers in northern India, was divided into many semi-independent municipalities under Muslim *nawabs* and Hindu *rajahs* who preoccupied themselves with hostilities and self-indulgence.

The Hindu *rajahs* were divided, and allowed marauders from the North-West to take away thousands of women and young girls to be sold as slaves in the Middle-East. Generally socio-political lawlessness was the order of the day.³³³ Social justice was left almost entirely to the corrupt priestly classes of the two main religions Islam and Hinduism.

“*Rajahs* were (ruthless) like tigers and the priestly judges were like

³³² Behlol Lodhi was reigning at Delhi at the time. He succeeded to the throne in 1451. Sikander Lodhi became king in 1488. He was succeeded by Abraham Lodhi in 1517 who died in 1526. Thus Guru Nanak (1469-1539) had seen three Lodhi rulers of Delhi in his life span. Babur attacked India in 1519, 1520, 1521, 1524, 1525 and became the Emperor on 22 April 1526. He imprisoned Guru Nanak at Aimanabad.

³³³ “Freedom was given to soldiers on march to loot barns and hamlets. Under most of the Sultans, this loot was legalised and a tax called *Khums* corresponding to one fifth of it was levied on the looters”

Forbidding the Hindus to ride on horseback, carry arms and dress elegantly. (“History of Punjab”, Punjabi University Patiala Vol3 page 210)

dogs, (and their officials) swooped down on people regardless of whether they were sitting or sleeping (i.e. at any time of the day) (GGS p.1288).”³³⁴

Superstition was rife and the priestly class thrived on fear. The plight of women and the lower classes (under the degrading *Manuvadic* caste system) was horrendous. These were the circumstances in which:

“At last, a call proclaiming monotheism arose from the Punjab, and India was awakened by a perfect (great) man of vision.” (Dr Iqbal)³³⁵

The new whole-life philosophy³³⁶ introduced by Guru Nanak was expounded and implemented systematically over a period of two hundred years by Guru Nanak and nine successor Gurus from the late fifteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth Century.

1.2 Life and work of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, which after Buddhism is the only other truly indigenous religion of India, was born on 14th April 1469³³⁷ at Talwandi (now called Nankana Sahib) in Punjab. This part of Punjab is now in Pakistan. His mother's name was *Mata Tripta* and his father Kalyan Rai Bedi, popularly known as Mehta Kalu, was a local land officer. The family belonged to the high caste of *Kshatriyas* called Bedi. Guru Nanak was thoughtful from very

³³⁴ “*Rajay sinh mokadam kutay, jai jagayan baithay sutay.*” (GGS p1288)

³³⁵ “*Phir uthi Aakhir sadaa tawheed ki Punjab se. Hind ko ek mard e kamil ne jagaya khwaab se.*”

(Kulyat e Iqbal, Educational Book House, Ali Garh, India (pp 239-240)

³³⁶ For further reading see Daljit Singh's booklet “The Sikh Worldview” published by the Institute of Sikh

Studies, Chandigarh 1993.

³³⁷ The old writings “*Puratan Janam Sakhi*”, “*Meharban's Sakhi*”, “*Bhai Mani Singh's Sakhi*” and “*Mehma Prakash*” give this date. And even those who give the traditional *Katak di Puranmarshi* (a lunar date in November) as the Guru's date of birth, then state that he lived 70 years, 5 months and 7 days and passed away in September (in the lunar month of Assu) 1539. Working backwards, even in the latter case, the Guru's date of birth falls in April 1469. The Sharomani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) has now formally given 14 April (1st Vaisakh) as Guru Nanak's date of birth but retained the traditional *Katak di Puranmarshi* for Panthic celebrations marking this occasion. The new solar Nanakshahi Calendar shows Nanakshahi year *Samat* 531 from 14 March 1999 to 13 March 2000. However, the adoption of this calendar is still under discussion.

early childhood. He had only one sister *Bebe* Nanaki, who was five years older. He had no brothers. Naturally, father Kalu had high hopes for young Nanak.

Guru Nanak's divine intellect, piety and caring personality became noticeable from an early age. At the age of seven he was sent to the local Hindu teacher (*pandha*) Brij Nath, to study Sanskrit. He surprised the *pandha* with his knowledge of letters and questioning approach. The same happened when he was sent to a Muslim teacher, Qutab-ud-Deen, to study Persian and Arabic. Both became devoted to him. He soon gained knowledge of ancient Indian lore, the Hindu Shastras, the Quran and the Islamic religion. A neighbour called Sayyed Hussain³³⁸ was most impressed by young Nanak's divine personality and used to tell him Islamic lore. Nanak spent a great deal of his time in discussion with *sadhus* and *faqirs* passing through. There is one historical incident when he got into trouble with his father for spending money given to him for doing some "profitable" business, on buying food for some hungry *sadhus*.

Another highly significant event which took place when Nanak was nine was when he refused to wear the Hindu sacred cotton thread, the *jeneu*, saying that he did not believe in rituals and symbols which had no meaning. He is reputed to have preached to his teachers from an early age, what he said to the Pundit (or *Pandha*) about the *jeneu* and its inner meaning could be regarded as Guru Nanak's first sermon to humanity.

He said: "From the cotton of compassion, spin the thread of contentment. Tie the knot of continence; give it the twist of virtues. Wear it, if you have such a sacred thread for the inner self, O Pundit.... (GGS p 471) ³³⁹

Bearing in mind that without a *jeneu* one was liable to be treated as an untouchable (*shudra*) by the Hindu religion, Guru Nanak in effect dissociated himself from the high caste to join the lowliest of the

³³⁸According to Siaral Mutakhreen, Sayyed Hussain was the Maulvi who also taught Persian to Guru Nanak.

(*Sada Ithaas* (P) by Satbir Singh p58 and Sikh Review of October 1969 p. 37)

³³⁹"*Dya kapah, santokh soot jat gandhi saat watt. Eh janeu ji ka haee ta Pande ghatt.....*"(GGS p 471)

low. “Nanak dwells with the lowliest of the low caste; why (for I have no desire to) be like the high caste” He said. (GGS p. 15)³⁴⁰

Many local scholars and civic leaders were very much impressed by young Nanak’s thoughtful personality and ideas. He always spoke words of divine wisdom. Rai Bular, the village head, became particularly attached to Nanak and so did Pundit Har Dyal, the family priest, and his teachers Brij Nath and Qutab-ud-Deen. It is interesting to note that the Guru’s early devotees included followers of both main religions at the time. However, father Kalu was not impressed. He wanted Nanak to be more successful in business and regarded Nanak’s interests as a waste of time.

Nanak became even more pensive, so much so that the local doctor was called to see if he had any illness. The doctor too received words of wisdom from Nanak. The message to father Kalu from all those who understood Nanak was “Kalu, your son has a higher mission in life. Do not be annoyed with him.”

He was married in 1485 and for his livelihood he combined work at the family farm with some business. He was always keen to meet travellers and was well aware of the socio-political situation in the country. He had two sons, Sri Chand born in 1497 and Lakhmi Chand born in 1499. The person closest to Nanak, who fully understood his mission, was his sister (*Bebe*) Nanaki. She was married to Jai Ram, who held a prominent position with the local ruler Daulat Khan Lodhi, at Sultanpur. In October 1504, at the age of 35, Guru Nanak moved over to Sultanpur where Jai Ram secured a good position for him as the keeper of accounts and stores for the Nawab. He made a name for his honesty and charitable work. He distributed income above his family expenditure to the needy and his fame spread. Many like Bhai Bhagirath and Bhai Mansukh became his followers when he was at Sultanpur.

In 1507, after a bath in river *Veyeen* followed by meditation in solitude on the Lord’s Name for two days, the Guru returned to announce, “ There is but One Creator whose name is Truth, Who is

³⁴⁰*Neechan andar neech zaat, nichī hoo att neech. Nanak tin ke sang saath wadian sion kia rees* (GGS p15)

self-born, and who is ever-lasting". He further admonished the whole society "No one is Hindu nor Mussalman." Guru Nanak had meditated on the decay in religious, social and political spheres of human life and was ready to take his bold message to the world.

"A rigorous analysis of the compositions of Guru Nanak reveals that there is hardly anything in contemporary politics, society or religion that he finds commendable. It may be argued that the entire social order had lost its legitimacy in the eyes of Guru Nanak because it had lost its support from the prevalent religious ideologies: it was neither "Hindu nor Muslim." "A new religious ideology was needed to become the basis of a new social order." (The New Cambridge History of India, *The Sikhs of Punjab* by Dr J S Grewal. Page 28)

After making due arrangements for his family, in October 1507, at the age of thirty-eight, Guru Nanak embarked on a succession of long itineraries to deliver his message of "Fatherhood" of One God and "Brotherhood" of mankind³⁴¹. He addressed religious, social and political issues boldly and at considerable risk to his life. The wording of his teachings (*Gurbani*) is often strong, impartial and uncompromising. Clearly Guru Nanak was not in the mould of the more docile saints of the Indian *bhagti* movement. He was a revolutionary and had a revolutionary new ideology to offer to mankind. "He cut himself adrift from all associations with prevailing sectarian religions, and, although, his approach to God was through love and devotion, he did not adopt the imagery and symbolism of vaishnavism or any other creed. His was the first and last successful attempt to bring together the Hindus and the Muslims in a common fold of spiritual and social brotherhood."(*The Delhi Sultanate* Page 569)

His *Japuji* (Sikh Morning Prayer) reveals that he was well aware of the coming of the age of discovery, technology and science. He presented a whole-life ideology based on the twin track philosophy of worldly and spiritual (*miri-piri*) progress. He challenged Babur³⁴²

³⁴¹Limitation of language: God has no gender in Sikh ideology and "brotherhood" is meant to convey sisterhood and complete equality between sexes. Indeed, "brotherhood" embraces all creation co-existing (i.e. with the God given right to co-exist) in accordance with the Will (*Hukam*) of the Creator.

³⁴² Babur wrote that Hindus were fit only for work as employees, artisans and contractors. (Tuzak-e-Babri. Mirza Amir-ud-din Haider page 342)

the Moghul invader and strongly rebuked him for the cruelty he had inflicted on “Hindostan.” Babur imprisoned him but released him from prison when briefed about the revered position, which the Guru held in the eyes of the Muslims and Hindus alike.

Guru Nanak made long journeys with his Muslim musician companion Mardana, to east and south India (1507 CE to 1515 CE), to the north (1517CE to 1518CE), and to the northwest and the Middle East including Mecca and Baghdad (1518 CE to 1521CE). He settled at Kartarpur (Now in Pakistan), completed the collation of his teachings and after passing on the Guruship to his worthy successor Guru Angad, he passed away on 5 September 1539 CE. Guru Nanak was a revolutionary: his questioning (Socratic) approach was revolutionary in the context of the traditional Indian *guru/sikh* (teacher/student) relationship and learning method; his religious ideology was revolutionary; his freedom inspiring Words (*Bani*), sung to popular beat and rhythm (e.g. *Asa di Vaar* sung to *Tunday Asrajay ki Dhunee*) challenged the rulers of the day and the language was revolutionary; and, not surprisingly, he laid the foundation of a progressive and prosperous new age social order which continues to challenge and question the oppressive religious-social order of the Indian sub-continent.

1.3 Sikh Gurus after Guru Nanak

Joti jote milaike Satgur Nanak roop wataya (Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 1. Pauri 45.)

“The Light merged with another and True Guru Nanak changed the form into another (Guru) personality.”

There were nine other Gurus after Guru Nanak who carried on preaching his revolutionary ideology. Guru Nanak’s teachings provided the foundation on which his nine successors continued to develop the Sikh worldly and spiritual (*miri-piri*) institutions to completion by 1699 CE.

1.4 The same Light in all ten Guru personalities³⁴³

Nanak II, Guru Angad (Guruship 1539-1552CE), collated the hymns of Guru Nanak in the popular Panjabi (Gurmukhi) script, added his own hymns and strengthened the institution of the holy congregation (*Sangat*) established by Guru Nanak. He promoted the education of children and encouraged sports and games. Based on the teachings of Guru Nanak, the institution of community kitchen and *pangat* (sharing and eating together without distinction of caste, creed or status) was firmly established and expanded.

Nanak III, Guru Amar Das (Guruship 1552-1574) built an important Sikh centre at Goindwal. The number of visitors to the centre increased rapidly. The caste conscious neighbourhood steeped in Brahmanic tradition, refused water supply to the trans-caste Sikhs of Guru Nanak. Therefore the Guru's followers excavated a large *Baoli* (A well with steps to go down) for water supply. The twin institutions of *sangat-pangat* (Holy congregation and communal kitchen) were now well established and Sikhism flourished under the guidance of Guru Amar Das. He wrote hymns for the benefit of the householder and preached a life of equipoise (*sahij*). He strengthened the Sikh organisation through establishment of local congregations of Sikhs (*sangats*) and through appointment of Guru's representatives not only in the Punjab but also throughout India. Amongst these representatives were a number of women. This was a most progressive and revolutionary step in view of the position of the women at the time. Every Sikh was asked to donate one tenth of his income (*daswandh*) for religious and charitable purposes. The Mughal Emperor Akbar visited the Guru in 1565 CE. In accordance with the Guru's instructions he too sat in a *pangat* (on the floor with the common people) and enjoyed the food before he saw the Guru. Akbar was pleased with what he saw and some historians mention that he allotted a piece of land to the Guru's daughter Bibi Bhani³⁴⁴. The town of Amritsar and the *Harmandir* (Golden Temple) now stand on this land. Thus Guru Amar Das gave a very significant practical direction to the teachings of Guru Nanak.

³⁴³See Chapter 7 (7.1) for the term Guru as a singular concept in Sikhism.

³⁴⁴Most historians however mention that the land was purchased by Guru Ram Das from the Zamindars of Village Tung.

Nanak IV, Guru Ram Das (Guruship 1574-1581 CE) started the excavation of the pool at Amritsar destined to become the nucleus of the Sikh *Panth* (Order). He developed the town of Amritsar for trade and business. Many centres of Sikhism were built under the Guruship of Ramdas. The Sikhs were now a sizeable, well-organised and flourishing community. So much so that they started attracting the attention of less tolerant Mughal Emperors who followed Akbar, and the Brahmanic divisive and socially oppressive *Manuvadic* tradition to which Guru Nanak's egalitarian teachings were not acceptable. The distinctness of the Sikh community became more pronounced due to own centres and meaningful ceremonies e.g. that of the Sikh marriage ceremony or Anand Karaj at which the Guru's teachings were read and sung. Sikh *sangats* flourished in Punjab and outside.

Nanak V, Guru Arjan Dev's Guruship (1581-1606 CE) was one of the most notables. He completed the excavation of the lake (*sarowar*) at Amritsar. In 1589, a Muslim divine Mir Mohammed Muayyinul Islam, popularly known as Mian Mir, was requested to lay the foundation stone of *Harmandar* (now known as the Golden Temple) which was built in the centre of the lake. Before this, no leader of a world religion had shown such goodwill towards another religion. *Harmandar* had four doors on all four sides; this signified that they were open to all castes, races and religions of the world. Guru Arjan Dev got the *Aadi Granth* (The First Book) compiled which included hymns of the first five Gurus (including his own). The hymns of 15 other Muslim and Hindu saints (*sants*), which accorded with the teachings of Guru Nanak, were also included selectively in the *Adi Granth*. The *Granth* was then installed in the *Harmandar*, the *sanctum sanctorum* of Sikhism, in 1604 CE. Jehangir, the Mughal Emperor after Akbar, was a fanatical and intolerant ruler. He was looking for some excuse to put a stop to the spread of Sikhism. The Guru was arrested under a political pretext and tortured to death by his orders in 1606 CE.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ In his autobiography 'Tuzak-e-Jehangiri' the Emperor wrote, "I was aware of the Guru's false cult. I therefore ordered him to be arrested and made over his household and family to Murtza Khan. Having confiscated his property I issued orders that he should be imprisoned and tortured to death under some political pretext" (Tuzak-e-Jehangiri published by Naval Kishore press Lucknow page 35)

Nanak VI, Guru Har Gobind (1606 CE-1645 CE) was enjoined by Guru Arjan Dev before the latter's martyrdom, to prepare the Sikhs for armed defence of Guru Nanak's faith as a last resort. Jehangir imprisoned Guru Har Gobind for a few years in a fortress but released him following representations by prominent Muslims like Mian Mir and Hindu leaders. In the time of Emperor Shah Jahan, the Guru trained his followers in the use of arms. He successfully repulsed four attacks prompted by those who were envious of the ascendancy of the Guru and the growing strength of the Sikh organisation. The saint-warrior image of the Sikhs began to take shape under the Guruship of Guru Har Gobind. He established the theo-political centre of Sikhism called the *Akal Takhat* (The Immortal Throne) opposite the Harmandir at Amritsar. This became the seat of the temporal aspirations of the Sikhs as a distinct nation. Thus the theo-political developments arising from Guru Nanak's teachings became institutionalised in the Harmandir and the Akal Takhat in close proximity. The scene was set for a clash between the oppressive Mughal regime egged on by the orthodox Islamic fanatics, the *Qazis* and the *Mullahs*, and the caste conscious *Brahmans* and *Kshatryas* on the one hand, and the Sikhs of the Guru committed to an egalitarian tolerant society on the other. A large number of prominent Hindus and Muslims (e.g. saintly people like the Muslim divine Mian Mir mentioned above) sided with the reformation movement spearheaded by the Gurus, which was beginning to emerge in its final form as a distinct "third path" (*Tisra Panth-khalsa*) after Hinduism and Islam. Guru Har Gobind addressed the Sikhs as Khalsa. One of his Orders (*Hukamnamah*) reads, "The *Sangat* of the East is the Guru's *Khalsa*".

Nanak VII, Guru Har Rai (1644-1661 CE) further consolidated the saint-soldier image of the Sikhs. Services for the treatment and care of the sick set up by earlier Gurus were expanded and there is anecdotal evidence that a well-stocked free dispensary was run by the Guru. The Sikhs were taught by the Guru to become responsible householders. The Guru was notable for his gentle nature and taught the Sikhs to put the peaceful message of *Gurbani* into practice. The Sikhs prospered a lot under the Guruship of Guru Har Rai. Yet, he accomplished all this from a position of strength as he also maintained a trained cavalry of 2,200. He was provoked on one or

two occasions, although, unlike Guru Har Gobind, he was not directly attacked. He taught the Sikhs to show humility and forgiveness from a position of strength (i.e. the Sikh maxim of *Taan honday hoay nitana*). Sikhism flourished under Guru Har Rai and many influential people in the Malwa area (south of river Sutlej) became the Guru's Sikhs. These Sikh families (*ghranas*) were later to help Guru Gobind Singh to regroup his forces at Sabo Ki Talwandi (Damdama Sahib) after his departure from the fort of Anandpur in December 1704 CE. Some of these families became the rulers of the Malwa in later years.

Nanak VIII, Guru Har Krishan (1661-1664 CE) took over Guruship when he was only five and died at the age of nine but his name is remembered with great affection and reverence by the Sikhs. The Child-Guru showed great wisdom and maturity even at that tender age. He carried Guru Nanak's missionary torch unwaveringly thus confirming that Guru Nanak's Light was the same in all the Guru personalities regardless of age. His visit to Delhi reconfirmed the direction of the mainstream Sikhism of Guru Nanak. Hundreds of Sikhs came to see him there. He passed on the Guruship to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Guru Nanak before his death.

However, the fanaticism and relentless oppression of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb was bound to clash with the robustly egalitarian Sikh Panth of Guru Nanak. The latter had himself not hesitated to confront Aurangzeb's ancestor, the invader Moghul Babur who had inflicted cruelties on the Hindu/Muslim public in 1521 CE. This clash between Babur's descendants (*Babur ke*) and Guru Nanak's descendants (*Babay ke*) became a bitter reality in the lives of the next two Gurus.

Nanak IX, Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664 CE-1675 CE) responded to the prayer of the public to save them from the bigotry and persecution of Emperor Aurangzeb. The latter got him executed in 1675 CE. Before his death the Guru had instructed his son Gobind Rai, to be frightened by no one as the obverse of frightening none (*Bhai kahun ko det neh, neh bhai manat aan*). The fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev had set a unique trans-religion goodwill example when he bestowed the honour of

laying the foundation stone of *Harmandir* (Golden Temple), the *sanctum-sanctorum* of the Sikh faith, by the Muslim savant Mian Mir (1530-1635 CE).³⁴⁶ The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in defence of a fundamental human right, that every person should be free to practise own religion, was the second universal message of Guru Nanak's Sikhism. It is important to understand that the Guru's sacrifice was not to save the Hindu religion *per se*, but to defend a fundamental human right. (Equally misleading it would be for the Hindu brothers to use this argument to ungratefully deny that the main beneficiary of the Guru's great sacrifice at that time **was** indeed the Hindu religion.)

1.5 Emergence of the Khalsa Panth.

Nanak X, Guru Gobind Rai, who after *Vaisakhi* 1699, became Guru Gobind *Singh* (1675CE-1708CE), made final preparations for the formal introduction of the Sikh assertive identity and brotherhood for organisational strength, common direction and purpose. He invited all followers of Guru Nanak to Anandpur and standing on a hillock with an unsheathed sword in his hand demanded a head. In succession five volunteers were taken inside a tent. Blood flowed and later, much to the amazement of the awe-stricken congregation, the five reappeared dressed in blue uniforms, armed with swords, and with a fearless spiritual glow on their faces.

These Five Beloved Ones (*Panj Piaray*) then took the *Amrit* (baptismal water) prepared by the Guru. This Ceremony removed caste distinctions and gave a common name, *Singh* (lion signifying a fearless spirit) to all men and *Kaur* (princess) to all women. They drank Amrit from the same iron bowl (*bata*) to show that any caste or other distinctions between them had been obliterated.

Standing on the hillock, on which was later built *Takhat Keshgarh Sahib*, one of the five main seats of Sikh authority, the Guru delivered his first sermon outlining aims and objectives of the

³⁴⁶ Madanjit Kaur in her book "The Golden Temple-Past and present" maintains that the foundation of the Golden temple was laid by Guru Arjan Dev himself.

Khalsa. From that day, thousands from all castes and religions came forward to take *Amrit* and join the new egalitarian brotherhood of the *Khalsa*. The *Khalsa* brotherhood was to rise above all sorts of castes, creeds, discriminations and inequalities. This was an extension and further confirmation of the Sikh *sangat-pangat* congregational tradition. Internal as well as external discipline was stressed. He reminded the Sikhs of the spiritual life of a true *Gursikh* (Guru's Sikh) as described in the teachings of the Gurus in Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs aspiring to become *Khalsa* were enjoined to rise early in the morning, take a bath and say prayers at sunrise and at sunset; nay they were to remember God's Name with every breath. Their conduct was to be exemplary and they were to resist oppression fearlessly and defend the weak. The discipline thus promulgated laid stress on righteous conduct and meditation on the Name of One God and no other. Freedom from fear and superstition was important for spiritual freedom and ultimate union with the Fearless. "Fear not, frighten none" teaching of the ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was to be the guiding principle of the *Khalsa*.

On that *Vaisakhi* day in 1699, the Guru yet again did something unique in the history of world religions. With folded hands, he asked the *Panj Piaray* (the first five baptized ones) representing the *Khalsa*, to baptise him i.e. the Guru himself! That day, he too became *Khalsa* Gobind Singh from Gobind Rai.

The Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh delivered the new order of the *Khalsa Panth* in its final shape. Thus the Sikh institutions were developed and consolidated systematically over a period of two hundred years. Unlike any other major world religion, Sikhism as a whole-life ideology was introduced in a society that had been steeped in dichotomous ideologies of asceticism and monasticism for over three thousand years. Guru Nanak's Sikhism is not just about individual salvation but it is about the establishment of a progressive and tolerant human society, which evolves towards higher ideals. The older society debilitated by negative ascetic and escapist ideologies and fragmented by embedded caste, cult and religious divisions was bound to show rejection symptoms when a new and vibrant ideology was introduced. The older society had become impervious to the punishment inflicted on it by religio-political corruption and flagrant abuse of basic human rights. It not

only took the new ideology over 200 hundred years but also hundreds of martyrdoms to awaken the spirit of independence in the former.

Guru Arjan got compiled the Sikh Holy Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib (popularly known as *Aadi Granth*). He included the teachings (*Gurbani*) of the first five Gurus and many Hindu and Muslim saints (*bhagats*). Guru Gobind Singh revised the Granth and included in it the *Gurbani* of the Ninth Master, Guru Tegh Bahadur. The spiritual Guruship was thus “returned” to *Gurbani* in the form of Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh bestowed the physical eternal Guruship on the collective body of the Sikh nation, the *Guru Khalsa Panth*. Thus started the tradition of the *Guru Granth/Guru Panth*. This is not to be regarded as some form of joint Guruship but One Guruship of the Guru’s Word (*Shabad*) as interpreted by the collective body of the *Khalsa Panth*. As *Guru Granth Sahib* is the eternal Guru of the Sikhs (subject to the clear understanding that the philosophy and not the Book is the Guru), therefore, the question of a “Second Coming” of the Guru does not arise.

“The word of the Guru is the Guru’s image that manifests itself in the holy congregation.”³⁴⁷ Contrary to the views of some outside observers of the history of the ten Sikh Gurus, there was no change in the underlying revolutionary ideology of Guru Nanak covering religious, social and political reforms. For example, at political level, unflinchingly and with forthright courage Guru Nanak wrote about and publicly condemned Babur’s invasion of India and the cruelty perpetrated by him on the Indian people. Guru Arjan Dev (Nanak V) faced Emperor Jehangir’s injustice and sacrificed his life. Guru Hargobind (Nanak VI) faced and defeated the aggression of local *nawabs*. Guru Tegh Bahadur (Nanak IX) said “live and let live”. He faced Emperor Aurangzeb’s bigotry and was beheaded at Delhi for his courageous stand. Guru Gobind Singh (Nanak X) led the revolt against the cowardly Hindu *rajahs* who were content to indulge in petty rivalries and own pleasures at the expense of the suffering ordinary people. And finally, proclaimed the Guru, “I bestow full political power on these poor down trodden Sikhs (i.e. ordinary people, poets and scholars who had flocked to him for

³⁴⁷ “*Gur Murat Gur Shabad hai sadh sangat wich pragti aya.* (Varan Bhai Gurdas 24.25)

protection.)". Thus was power returned to the people. That is Guru Nanak's legacy through ten human forms.

On the basis of this ideology, the Sikhs (or more accurately *Khalsa Panth*) established a sovereign *Khalsa* state under Ranjit Singh in northern India as a tolerant multicultural society in which Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were equal citizens. Guru Nanak's dream of a just society in the spirit of unity in diversity (*anekta meh ekta*) had come to fruition nearly two hundred years before global acceptance of this ideology through the United Nations charter on Human Rights.

The Sikhs are a widespread and enterprising global community numbering over 25 million. Punjab, which is now divided between India and Pakistan, is their homeland. As in the case of other religions, many offshoots of Sikhism have come into existence. The most prominent of these are the *Nam Dhari*, the *Radha Swami* and the *Nirankari* sects. Other minor groups have formed around the so-called *sant sampardais* (schools headed by Sikh religious men). However, the main stream *Khalsa Panth* with its head quarters at Darbar Sahib (the complex including the twin institutions of *Harmandir* and *Akal Takhat*) at Amritsar, indisputably represents main stream Sikhism of Guru Nanak/Guru Gobind Singh's mission.

ANNEX 2

History of Islam³⁴⁸

2.1 Background

When Prophet Muhammad introduced Islam as a new faith in Arabia at the beginning of the 7th century CE, the Arabian people were divided into hundreds of tribes. Other than marauding excursions into each other's territory, the social and civic activities of each tribe were restricted to its own internal affairs under the chieftainship of the tribal head. There was no national consciousness or organisation in Arabia.

The inhabitants worshipped hundreds of gods and goddesses and Mecca was the Centre of idol worship. In the *Kaaba* at Mecca were kept 360 statues of gods and goddesses³⁴⁹. There were numerous cult practices; people were superstitious and believed in idol worship, power of stars, magic, necromancy, astrology and incantations. Stones, demons and ghosts were worshipped. Gambling and drinking were very common. Money was lent at exorbitant rates of interest. Taking revenge was considered a religious duty. Women were treated as chattels and daughters were killed at birth or buried alive. Slavery was common. Every year, a fair was held in Mecca, which often resulted in religious and sectarian warfare. However, in the main cities and towns there were a few God-fearing people who did believe in One God and were known as *Hanif*. In Mecca, one such believer was Wargah-bin-Nufal, who had studied and translated Jewish and Christian scriptures. There were many followers of Judaism in Medina.

³⁴⁸ Islam in Arabic means “in God's Will (*razaa*)”. Mr. Margoliouth in his book ‘Muhammad and the rise of Islam’ writes that Islam started as a “secret society”. Perhaps from its etymological derivation, Muhammad used the word to mean ‘one who surrendered his person to Allah’.

³⁴⁹ “Gurmatt te Islam” (P), Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana.

2.2 Life and work of Prophet Muhammad

The founder of Islam, Prophet Muhammad³⁵⁰, was born in Mecca on 20th April 571 CE³⁵¹ in the tribe of Quraish who managed the affairs of *Kaaba* (later to become the holiest shrine of the Muslims). His father Abdullah had died before his birth and his mother Amina expired when he was only six years old. He was looked after and brought up by his grand father Abdul Matlib; but, as ill luck would have it, even his grand father died two years later and Muhammad was left in the care of his uncle Abu Talib³⁵², who was a leader of the Quraish tribe. Abu Talib was a merchant and often took his nephew Muhammad with him when he went on long trading journeys to the adjoining countries. Thus young Muhammad acquired considerable knowledge of Judaism and Christianity. Very little is known about Prophet Muhammad's early life except that once he was lost and his uncle found him in the Holy *Kaaba*. This shows that right from the start he was inclined towards religion. At the age of ten he started grazing goats and at 12 visited Basra where he met a holy man. Soon after, war (*Known as Harb-e-Fajar*) broke out between the tribes of Qais, Hawarzin and Quraish in the *Hajj* period in which wars were forbidden. This war lasted for four years and Muhammad (at the age of 14) also took part in this war.

Muhammad was only 25 when a rich 40 years old woman named Khadija (also known as Tahira), daughter of Khawaleed, employed him as her assistant in trade. Muhammad went to Syria for trade with Khadija's slave Mesra. He earned a name in hard work and

³⁵⁰ 'Muhammad' literally means "praiseworthy". He descended from Kusa bin Kalab who was once the manager (*mutwal*) of Mecca and used to distribute food free of charge to the pilgrims of Mecca. He also caused tanks of water to be made for pilgrims. Kusa's son was Abdu Munaf. Abdu Munaf's son Hasham was very famous. He was instrumental in reducing the taxes on caravans and stopping the plunder of caravans. Hasham's son was brought up by Hasham's brother Matlib and came to be known as Abdul Matlib. Abdul Matlib discovered the well of *Abe zam zam*. On his death the management of Mecca passed on from the tribe of Quraish to the tribe of Bani Ummia. Abdul Matlib's son Abdullah married Amina. Abdullah went to Syria with his caravan and on return died at Medina. Muhammad was born of this wedlock after Abdullah's death.

³⁵¹ Historians differ on the date of birth. Some writers give the year of birth as 570 CE. Allama Shibli's *Sirat- al-Nabi* gives 22 April 571

³⁵² He was Hazrat Ali's father who later became the fourth Caliph of Islam and is known as a doughty warrior. Prophet Muhammad gratefully acknowledges God's benedictions and writes; "Didn't God find you an orphan? Didn't He find you helpless and friendless and provided you with a roof on your head and issued forth instruction" (HQ93:6)

honesty, doubled the profit in one year and came to be known as *Al-amin* (honest and trustworthy). Soon after he got married to Bibi Khadija.³⁵³ After some time Muhammad began to devote most of his time in thoughtful moods and prayed to God in the cave of *Hira* (three miles outside Mecca). He was 40 years old when in the month of Ramzan³⁵⁴ in 610 CE Angel Jibrael appeared before Muhammad in that cave and said, “Read”³⁵⁵. He also told him that the latter had been appointed a *Rasul* (Messenger) by God. Three years after this³⁵⁶ he began receiving revelations from God³⁵⁷ and soon proclaimed his Prophethood with the basic concept *La Ilaha illallah Muhammad-ar-Rasul Allah* (There is only one God and Muhammad is His Messenger). Like Christ’s Sermon on the Mount Prophet Muhammad delivered his first *Khutba* (sermon) on a mountain known as *Koh-e-safa*. At this time his Uncle Abu Lahab threw a stone at him and condemned him as a heretic.³⁵⁸ Most people

³⁵³ Muhammad married Khadija by offering her 20 camels as *mehar*. According to Seerat Ibn-Hasham (page 57) She was 15 years older than him and had been married twice before. This wedlock produced seven children, three sons and four daughters. Only Bibi Fatima remained alive until the Prophet’s last days. She was married to Hazrat Ali.

³⁵⁴ Muslims observe 30 days of fasts in this month and consider it the most auspicious time of the year.

³⁵⁵ Some people write that Muhammad was unlettered (*Al-nabi Al-Ummi HQ 7:158*). Others say that although not highly educated, he did have a smattering knowledge of the language and literature. At the time of the treaty with Meccans (agreement of Habibia) Ali is reported to have signed the agreement writing Muhammad Rasul Allah. The Prophet snatched the paper from him, struck off his writing and wrote Muhammad Ibn Abdullah. (Sahih Muslim and SB 114, 185 and 196) Before his death he is also reported to have asked for a pen and inkpot to sign (Tarikh Mutarjam Vol 2 page 362) his Will but died before he could sign it. We also read that the Prophet had a literary bent of mind and was very fond of listening to the poetry of Qiss Bin Saad Ayavi which he appreciated very much (See Muslim-Kitab-al-Shayer). Shia Muslims do not accept that the Prophet was illiterate. They quote Ibn Maajha who on the authority of Abu Huraira writes that the Prophet had very good proficiency in Persian as well. Prophet’s wife Aisha reported, “Allah’s messenger in His last illness asked me to call Abu Bakar so that he might write a document, for he feared that someone else might be desirous of succeeding him.” (SM 5879)

³⁵⁶ This period is known as Fitra.

³⁵⁷ The Prophet’s wife Aisha tells us that “The commencement of the divine inspiration of Allah’s Apostle was in the form of good dreams, which came true like the bright daylight.” (SB 3 V.1 B.1)

³⁵⁸ Abu Lahab was Muhammad’s uncle. He and his wife were bitter enemies of Muhammad. Lahab’s wife used to throw rubbish on the Prophet’s head and sprinkled thorns in his way. Muhammad cursed Lahab and his wife in Sura Al-Lahab 11:1-3 and wrote, “May the hands of Abu Lahab perish. Doomed he is. His wealth and his gains shall not avail him. He shall enter a blazing fire and his wife, the carrier of firewood, shall have a rope of palm fibre round her neck”.

became his enemies and greeted him with *Alsam-u-laikum* (May you die)³⁵⁹ instead of *Asslam-u-alaikum*. Abu Sufian of Banu Ummya even contrived to kill him³⁶⁰. One day when Muhammad went to the Holy *Kaaba*, people tried to lynch him but Haras-bin-Hala saved him although he himself was killed in the affray. On another occasion Akba bin Mueet put a rope round Muhammad's neck when the latter was praying and tried to strangle him. Abu Jahal always shouted abuse at the Prophet and Waleed labelled him a wizard and called for his death³⁶¹. Islam was first accepted by Zaid Ibn Haras, one of the slaves of Bibi Khadija. Later Ali and Abu Bakar also became Muslims. Soon however, Prophet Muhammad was ostracized by the Meccans. In these difficult times his wife Khadija (65 years) and his Uncle Abu Talib died adding to his trials and tribulations. Prophet Muhammad married a widow named Sauda and later also married Abu Bakar's daughter Aisha.

Prophet Muhammad moved to Taif, (about 70 miles from Mecca) to live with his uncle Abbas but the latter declined to support him and joined the people who were throwing stones at him.³⁶² On 16 July, 622 CE, Prophet Muhammad left his hearth and home in Mecca and settled down 400 kilometers in the north at Yathrab (Yathrab was renamed *Medina-tul-Nabi* i.e. the Prophet's city)³⁶³. Even here his Meccan enemies did not let him live in peace and He had to fight many battles with the help of Ansars³⁶⁴. Later He had to fight even against Ansars and the Jews. In 628CE He visited Mecca again and a peace treaty with the Meccans was signed which did not last long. On 1st January 630 CE He invaded Mecca with a sizeable force of

³⁵⁹ See Dr. Nazir Ahmed's translation of Quran page 153 "You are following a man bewitched"(HQ25:8)

³⁶⁰ " They were contriving to commit your murder"(Sura Al Anfal verse 30)

³⁶¹ see translation of Quran Dr. Nazir Ahmed page 481"

³⁶² " They crowded on him, almost stifling (HQ 72: 19)

³⁶³ The Muslim Hijra (Emigration) calendar starts from the date of this exodus. Muhammad caused the mosque of Qaba to be built in Medina. It was here that he started the *Azan* (call to prayer) and appointed his slave Bilal as the first *Muezzin*. He also instituted the custom of *Roza* (fasting) and concluded a treaty with the Jews. Ansars (Muslims of Medina) fell out with Muhammad after the battle of Hunain on the division of spoils of war (Sura Tauba 58-60). In verse 29 of Sura Tauba Christians and Jews were declared as disbelievers and ostracized. A special tax called Jazia was imposed on them

³⁶⁴ More famous of these battles are (a) Battle of Badar- This battle was fought in a month in which fighting was considered illegal and impious. To justify it Muhammad wrote verse HQ2: 214) (b) Battle of Ohd 25.3. 625 CE (HQ3: 119) (c) Battle of trenches 5 Hijra. and (d) Battle of Ahzab

10,000 men and captured it. His staunch enemies Abu-Sufyan and his wife Handa along with their daughter Umm Habiba accepted Islam. When most of the Meccans accepted Islam the idols in the *Kaaba* were destroyed except the Black stone (*Hajar-al-Aswad*) which Prophet Muhammad himself placed in the *Kaaba*.³⁶⁵ He smashed the statue of Al-Hobl (a god) with his own hands.³⁶⁶ On this day He recited “Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished away. Lo! Falsehood is ever bound to vanish”(HQ17: 81 SB244, 658 V3B43).

A Jewish woman named Zainab-bin-Haras mixed poison in Muhammad’s food. He survived but the poison made him suffer till his death³⁶⁷. After 13 days of serious illness (at the age of 63) He delivered his last *Khutba* at *Arfah* sitting on his camel declaring that no Prophet or Messenger³⁶⁸ would come after him (*Khatum -un-Nabiyeen*) and that no new faith will emerge. “Muhammad is not the father of anyone among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets”(HQ33: 40)

“Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as the way of your life.” (HQ5: 3)³⁶⁹

He died on 8 June 632 CE³⁷⁰ but by then almost the whole of Arabia and many adjoining countries had accepted Islam. No other world

³⁶⁵ The Muslims consider this stone sacred and kiss it. It is their belief that Adam brought it from heaven and Abraham placed it in the *Kaaba*. At that time it was white. In 683 CE it cracked into three pieces when a flaming arrow hit it. In 980 CE Al Qaramitah Muslims took it away from Mecca and returned it only after 20 years in CE 1000. Today it is in seven pieces (Encyclopaedia of Islam page 77, Short encyclopaedia Leiden 1953 page219)

³⁶⁶ (Talkhis Vol.5 page 9 Bukhari Vol. 1 page 339 Hasham page 406). There were 360 idols in Kaaba. The most worshipped idols were Al-Hobl, Al-Uzza, Al-Lat, Al-Wud, Al-Suah, Al-Yagus, Al-Aza, Al-Manat, Al-Nyali, and Al-Yakuk.

³⁶⁷ Muhammad’s food was tested by one of his companions who died but Muhammad had only eaten one morsel and survived.

³⁶⁸ Muslims believe in Basharat, which means that every Prophet tells about the one that will follow him. For example Abraham predicted Moses, Moses predicted Dawd, Dawd predicted Christ and Christ predicted the coming of Muhammad after him. Muhammad in his turn did not predict the coming of any Prophet or messenger.

³⁶⁹ The Muslims believe that Quranic revelation was the last one and that the Christian and Judaic revelations stood abrogated.

³⁷⁰ Some historians give the date of death as 7th June 632 CE. Still others give 8th July 632CE. The discrepancy appeared because of the conversion of Hijra calendar into Gregory calendar and because of the disagreement of the scholars and historians on the date of the

religion spread so quickly in the lifetime of a preceptor, as did Islam during the life of the Prophet.

2.3 Islam after Prophet Muhammad

Abu Bakar (real name Abdullah) who was the Prophet's friend and deputy, became the next Caliph³⁷¹ (632 CE-634 CE) with the title of As-Sadiq (Testifier to the truth). Tolaiha Musailimah and Nuwairah Aswad are also known to have claimed the right to Prophethood but they were killed. Hazrat Umar (634 CE-544 CE), who conquered Jerusalem and large parts of Iran, Syria and Egypt, followed Abu Bakar. A Persian named Abu Luka stabbed him³⁷². After these two outstanding and gifted leaders came Hazrat Usman (644-656CE), who conquered large areas of North Africa and Cyprus but fell victim to internal strife and dissension.³⁷³ Troubles started when Hazrat Usman (*Banu Ummya* tribe) was murdered in Medina. Some people accused the Prophet's son-in-law Hazrat Ali (656-661CE-son of Prophet's uncle from *Banu Hasham*)³⁷⁴ of masterminding this murder and the rock-solid unity of the Muslims began to develop cracks. Hazrat Ali was elected the next Caliph in Medina. He is said to have dismissed all governors of the *Ummya* tribe and in their places appointed Quraish of Hashamite tribe (which was his own tribe).

beginning of Hijra year. The Prophet is believed to have risen to heaven riding on Buraq (an animal which looks like a pony).

³⁷¹Or Khalifa- the word means to leave behind i.e. a representative in the absence of the person in authority. According to *Islamic Shria*, a *Khalifa* was considered next to God. "In all the territory lying between the East and the West, no Muslim king could assume the title of a Sultan, unless some sort of an understanding was arrived at between him and the Khalifa"(Arnold; The Caliphate page 101-2)

³⁷² Abu Luka was a Christian. His resentment stemmed from taxes on Christians which he thought, were too exorbitant. He stabbed 13 people at the time of prayer (Umar among them). Nine of them later died.

³⁷³ These four Caliph's are known as Khulfa-e-Rashdin. Usman was assassinated ostensibly on accusations of nepotism. Some say that his death was due to the fact that he authorized only one version of the Quran and destroyed the others. He was besieged (battle of Tabuk) and killed.

³⁷⁴ Hazrat Ali was not only a very brave man (named Assad-Allah =Lion of Allah by the Prophet) but also a great scholar. The Prophet called him "The gate of learning".

Muavia³⁷⁵ (of *Banu Ummya*), governor of Syria, declined to resign and tow the line. He collected a large army. Ali clashed with the armies of the Prophet's wife Aisha at Jammal and after defeating her declared Kufa (in Iraq) as his capital. Later after a skirmish with Muavia, Ali signed a truce accepting Muavia as the legitimate ruler of Syria. According to this truce Ali was to keep only Iran, Arabia and Egypt. This was not acceptable to some of Ali's companions. They left Ali (they are known as *Kharjis*).

Soon after this Muavia attacked and conquered Egypt. This incensed the *Kharjis* so much that they killed Ali³⁷⁶ and wounded Muavia. Tempers cooled down for some time but then Muavia's son Yazid and Ali's son Hussain clashed in Karbla (680CE). Hussain and his 18 close relatives were all killed³⁷⁷. His followers came to be known as Shia³⁷⁸. The three factions Kharji, Shia and Sunni (followers of Muavia) became enemies of each other and internecine wars broke out resulting in the decline of Islamic rule. Ummayyads of Baghdad were overthrown by Abbasides (they traced their origin from an uncle of Prophet Muhammad). The Shia Fatimides (deriving their name from Bibi Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad) conquered Egypt. They founded Cairo as their new capital, and set up a rival Shia caliphate to that of the Abbasid Sunni Caliphate of Baghdad which was later overthrown by Salah-ud-din Yusuf ibn Ayub (commonly known as Saladin) in 1171 CE. In 1258 CE

³⁷⁵ Muavia was the son of Abu Sufyan, a staunch enemy of the Prophet.

³⁷⁶ At the morning prayer Ibn Muljan (belonging to Kharjiite rebels) killed Ali because Ali was suspected of killing a lot of kharjiites in a battle at Nahrawan.

³⁷⁷ Hassan and Hussain were Prophet Muhammad's grandsons. The Shias believe that Prophet Muhammad had predicted and told Bibi Fatima at the birth of Hussain that Hussain would die as a martyr. Hussain's severed head was displayed in a procession (10 Muharram) and presented by Umar ibn Saad in a platter to the Governor of Iraq.

³⁷⁸ The word Shia literally means 'supporter'. Shias supported Hazrat Ali. They do not recognise the first three Caliphs of the Sunni faith. They call Ali as the first Caliph and call Yazid 'a usurper' and nick name him 'Paisa' (money-minded). Ali's grave in Najaf and Hussain's in Karbla are their sacred places of pilgrimage. Their twelfth Imam Abu-al-Qasam-al-Mahdi disappeared in a cave at Samurrah in 940 CE and is still thought to be alive. Shias believe that Imam Mehdi will appear on the doom's day and propagate Islam. They do not recognise the Saha Sattah (The six *Ahadis* of the Sunnis). They have instead their own five ahadis, which they call *Akhbar*. They perform *Mutah* (A marriage for a limited period by paying some money to a woman and finishing it off after the agreed time) which is looked down upon by the Sunnis. Shias further broke into many factions. Some of them are Ismaelias, Vohras, Jafrias, Khojas, and Bahais.

Mongols killed the last Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad. One after the other Spain, Africa, and Iran rebelled and established independent kingdoms. Caliphate nearly ended at this period in Islamic history. The Caliph's name was only mentioned in the Friday prayers. Shias ended the Caliphate and began calling their religious leaders Imams (there were 12 of them). They came to be known as Imamia. Again Shias subdivided and another sect known as Ismaelia came into existence (They recognise Ismael as being the seventh Imam).

There are 1,126,325,000 Muslims in the world.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ Source: Britania year book 1997. According to Islamic council of Europe the world population of Muslims was 907,197,000 in 1976

Opinions

I have read Sardar G.S.Sidhu and Sardar Gurmukh Singh's manuscript with great interest and enthusiasm. It is a very scholarly work and is a unique, commendable contribution to the treasury of literature on Sikhism. It provides very valuable stimulating material for both researcher and intense devotee of Sikh studies. It is a book that should be on the shelf of every Sikh, Sikh missionary in particular and a student of Sikh history and Sikhism. I pray to Akaalpurkh to grant the authors healthy mind, sound body, happy life and pen-power to serve the Sikh nation and its religion.

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Sardar G.S. Sidhu and Principal Gurmukh Singh have worked very hard to put at one place the salient features of both Sikhism and Islam. That is a rare phenomenon. There are few Hindus or Sikhs who have gone through works on Islam, much less Al-Qoran, and still fewer who have gained mastery over the subject matter. Both of them deserve high appreciation.

This book is a must for Sikh children, having interaction with their classmates in their schools and colleges. It shall be a gain for the elders to be apprised of the salient features of Sikhism and Islam, given so cogently, side by side. People can expect something new, something original in this comparative study.

Dr.Sangat Singh

Delhi

There have been efforts by certain groups to criticise and malign other religions and to eulogize their on beyond truth. A sensible approach to such criticism is in the form of comparative studies of religions. This study is a pioneer effort in this direction for promoting peace, good will and a spirit of understanding and co-existence among people of different faiths.

Karnail Singh

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